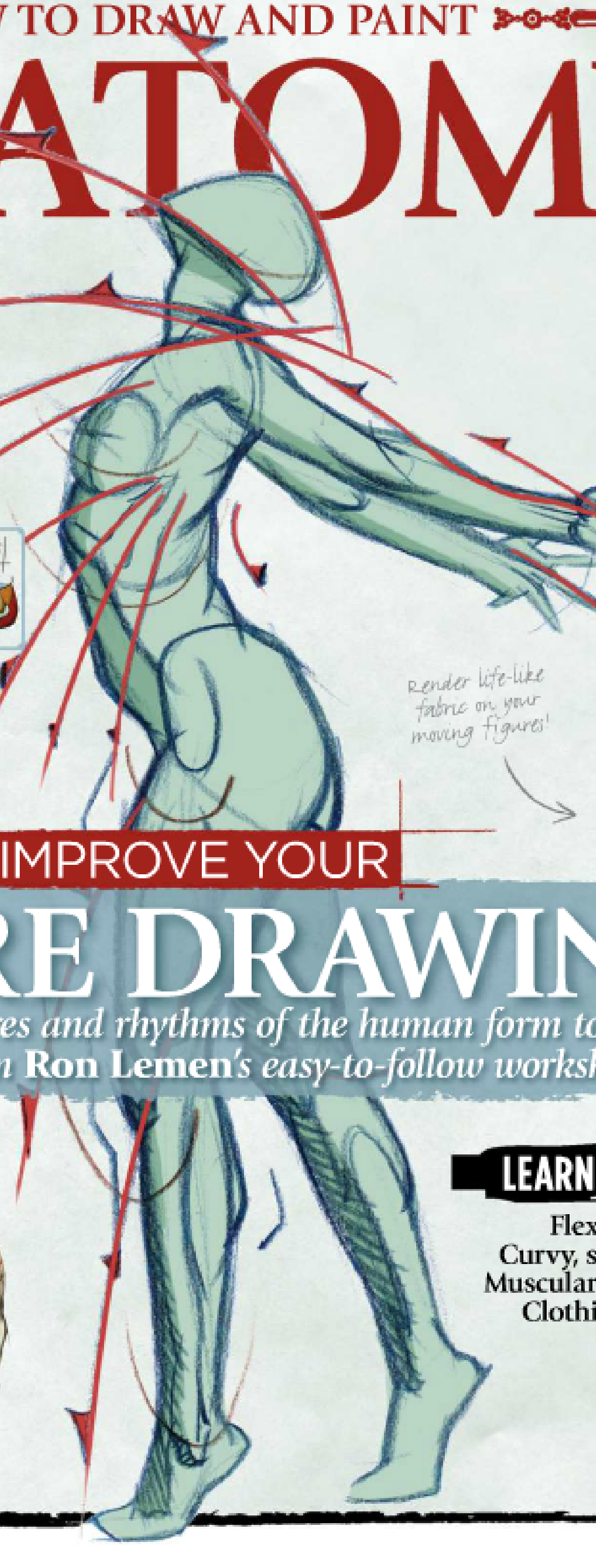
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART
ImagineFX
PRESENTS

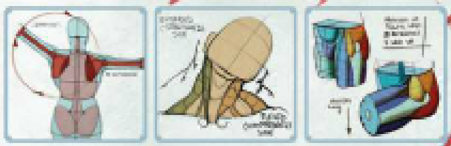
HOW TO DRAW AND PAINT

ANATOMY



GESTURE SKETCHING

How to create expressive figure studies from memory



DRAW THE HUMAN BODY IN MOTION

Master poses, perspective and proportion to capture how the body moves

VOLUME 2

IMPROVE YOUR

FIGURE DRAWING

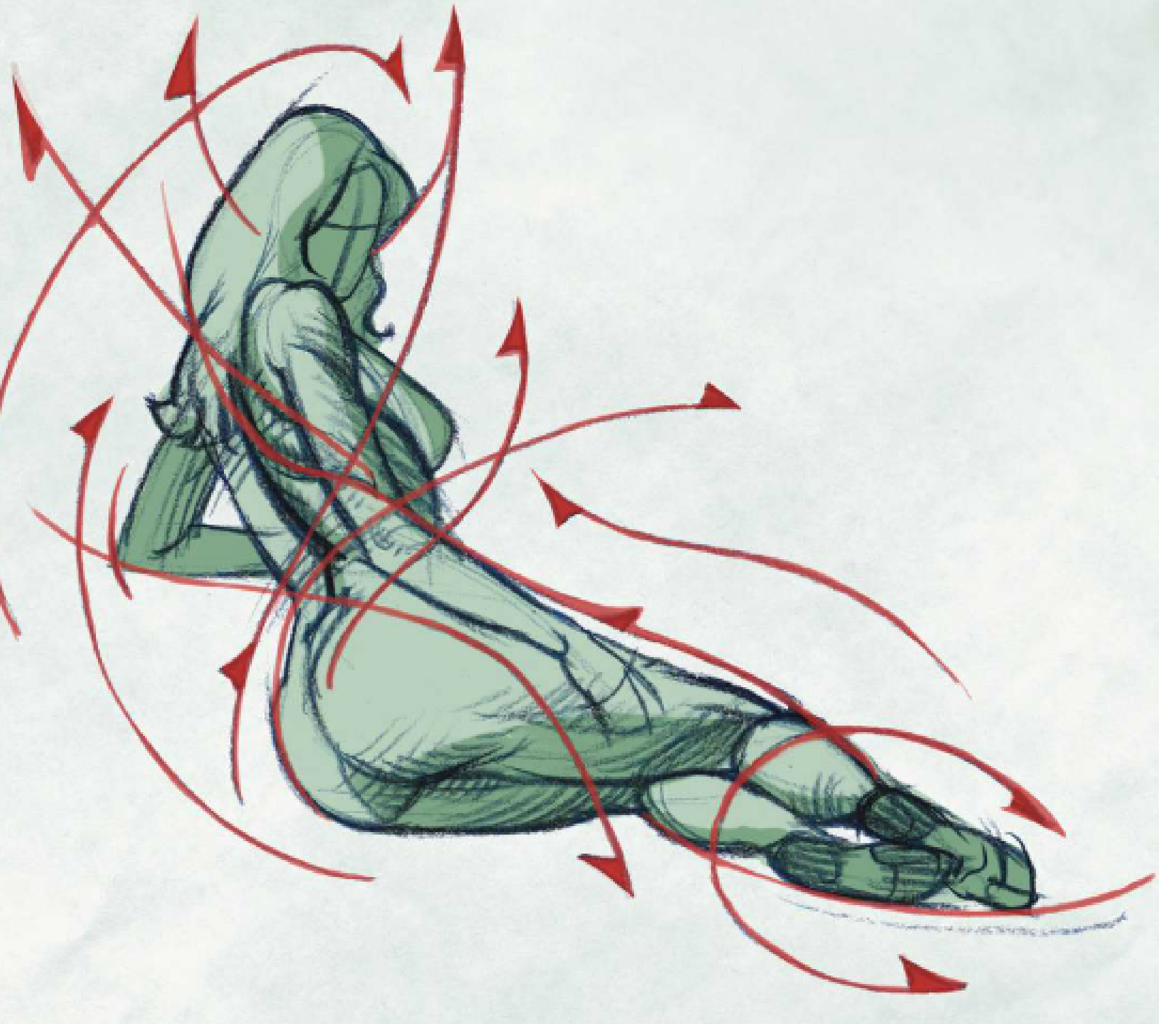
Discover the structures and rhythms of the human form to create dynamic figures in **Ron Lemen's** *easy-to-follow workshops*

76 PAGES OF WORKSHOPS

Learn essential traditional and digital art techniques to draw and paint the human body

LEARN TO DRAW

- Flexible wrists
- Curvy, strong hips
- Muscular shoulders
- Clothing & folds



FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX PRESENTS

HOW TO DRAW AND PAINT

ANATOMY

Welcome...

This is the second time we've teamed up with the fantastic artist Ron Lemen to present his workshops on drawing the human body. In this special edition of ImagineFX you'll find Ron's methods for drawing figures from life and then from memory – it's essential reading for aspiring or professional artists alike. We couldn't resist digging deeper into Ron's amazing knowledge on the subject and sharing it with you here.

In this collection of new anatomy tutorials, Ron takes his thinking a step further and explains how the human body moves. In these workshops you'll learn his method for breaking the human body apart into simple shapes, then how they connect through rhythmic lines to draw the body in motion.

Like Ron, artist Chris Legaspi has a passion for figure drawing so we've presented his ideas for capturing gesture, as well as rendering light and shade, when figure drawing. These workshops, found on pages 66 and 70, complement Ron's deeper anatomy teaching.

If you want to take your art a step further, we've also included workshops and guidance from leading illustrators on transferring your traditional art skills into digital using Photoshop and Painter. Full of unmissable advice, they start on page 86.

If you've enjoyed this special edition of ImagineFX, check out page 115 for details of the other issues in our How to Draw and Paint series. We're sure you'll love them!

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

From the makers of
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX
We're the only magazine dedicated to fantasy and sci-fi art. Our aim is to help artists to improve both their traditional and digital art skills. Visit www.imaginefx.com to find out more!

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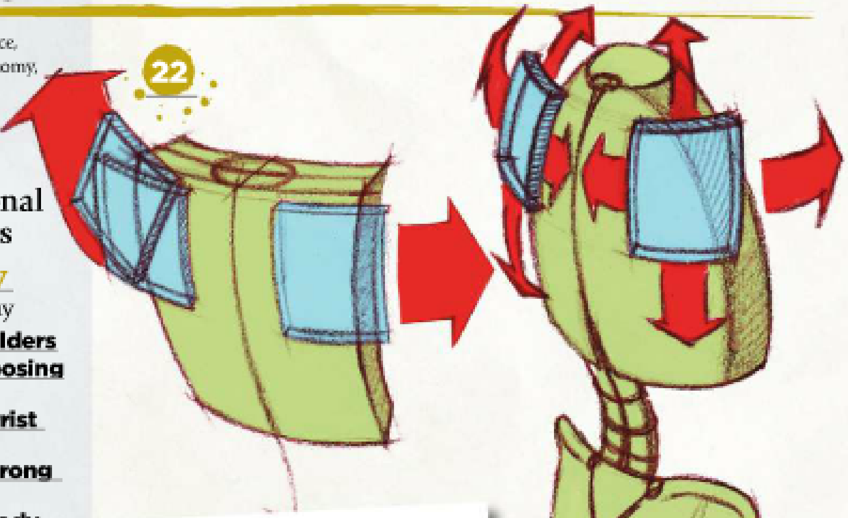

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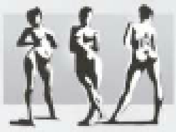

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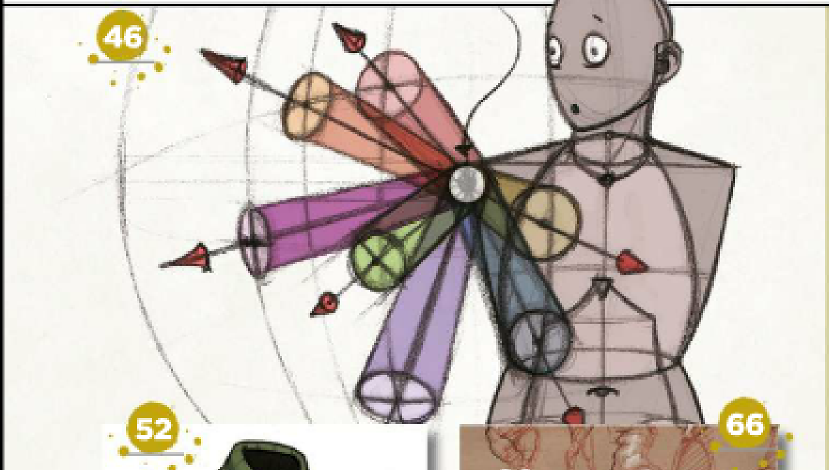

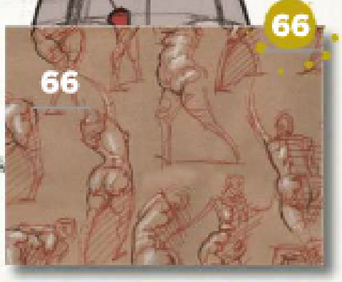

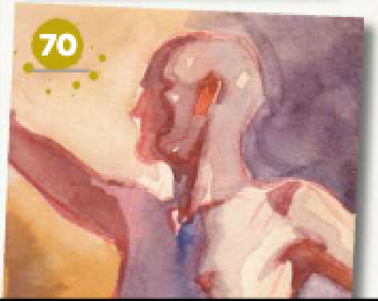

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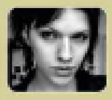
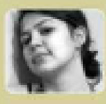


Lauren K Cannon
The American painter share's her techniques for adding freckles to a face and rendering dark complexions.

Joel Carlo
Core art terms such as sfumato and chiaroscuro are just some of the subjects explored by Joel.

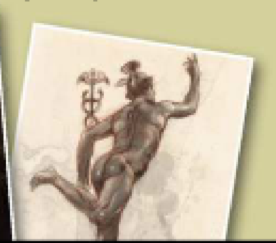


Marta Dahlig
Here Marta explains how to create lively portraits and add skin tone highlights to your paintings.

Cynthia Sheppard
Varied colour shading in your painted figures and foreshortening tips are tackled by Cynthia.

Mélanie Delon
The French artist explores ways to paint realistic flowing hair and facial proportions in profile.

Jeremy Enecio
Some easy ways to add textured atmospheric effects to your digital art are outlined by Jeremy.



USING YOUR VIDEO AND RESOURCE FILES

Sketches and videos to help you learn at the tap of a finger…

Video workshops
Follow video workshops from Nicole Cardiff and Anne Pogoda for key digital art techniques, or sample Jack Bosson's figure drawing workshop. Plus, explore how to draw the face in Digital Tutors's full workshop.

Resource files
View Ron Lemen's detailed anatomy sketches to follow his methods. Then check out Chris Legaspi's figure drawing images and Justin Gerard's art that accompanies his core drawing skills workshops.

WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/ifz-skinvid

If you see this badge on the page, there's a video to watch within the workshop! Tap the arrow to play the video.

If you see this, tap it to download the workshop files!

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifz-paintskin

Gallery

Get inspired by the legendary artists behind some of fantasy's most iconic images

Frank Frazetta

To say that Frank Frazetta, who died in 2010, was an inspiration is to understate his impact, not just on art but on popular culture. His visions of barbarians, fantastical creatures and the female form brought a new realism and boldness to fantasy art that cast an influence on books, comics, film and music.

From the outset, Frank had a loose, yet bold and dramatic style. In 1965 Frank painted the cover of Robert E Howard's Conan The Adventurer. It was visceral, iconic and exploded the preconception of what fantasy art should be. "I don't see detail, just a certain atmosphere," he once told us.

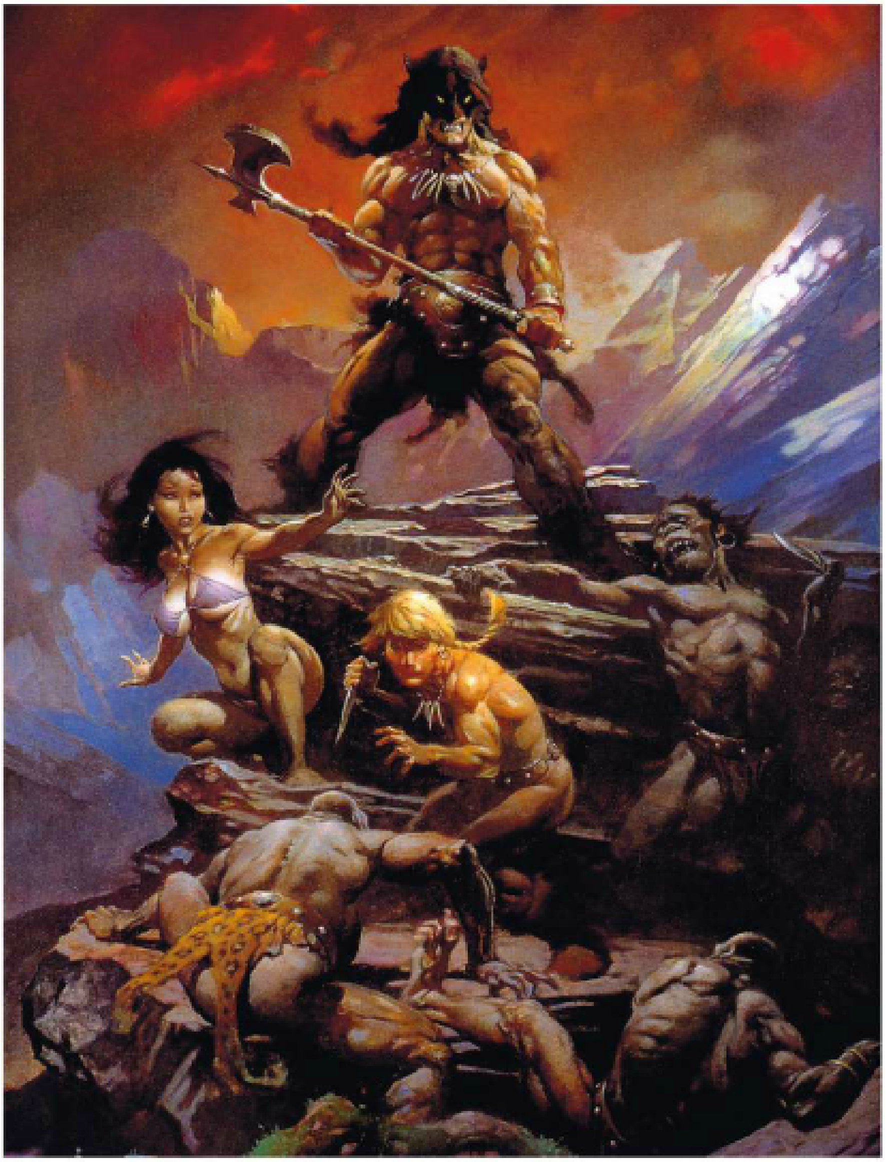
Between 1965 and 1973, Frank produced most of his more famous illustrations, including Cat Girl, Silver Warrior and the iconic Death Dealer. He often regarded himself as painting "by instinct" and would "draw almost unconsciously". "It's like my mind is one place and my hand is another," he said. "Somehow it all starts to come together."

In the 1980s his art featured on album covers, T-shirts and in films. Unfinished sketches sold for thousands and the original Conan painting for $1 million. "Frazetta revitalised fantasy art with a fresh sense of the iconic image, drawn from his own vivid feeling for drama and conflict," said artist James Gurney

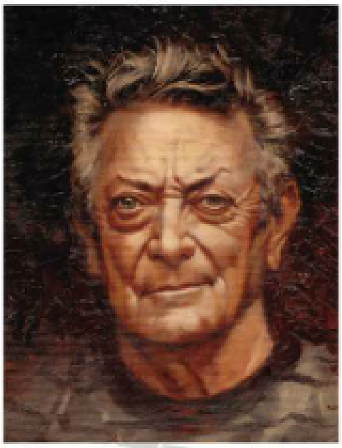
Frank was a unique talent who bridged the gap between the Golden Age and the modern era. http://bit.ly/GF3xg7

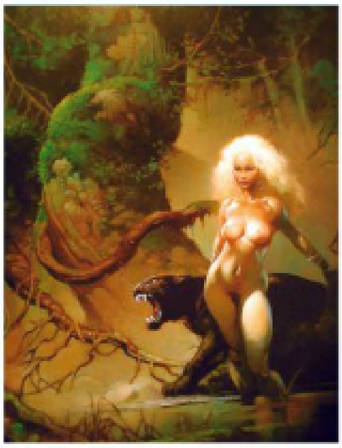
Wise words

"I never have a solid image in my head before I start drawing, just a certain feeling about it. On very rare occasions I see the images very clearly once I start sketching, but they're usually just very simple scenes."



❝ I think I'll be remembered for my imagination, drama and not being afraid to take a chance ❞





Wise words

"Once I'm happy with the composition, I'll work on the forward figures first: they're the most important. There's an interaction of shapes that provides a feeling of stillness. I think that's why people react to my art, even if they can't figure out why."

Jon Foster

Jon Foster has done covers for some of the biggest comic book series out there, including Batman, Star Wars, Alien Vs Predator and Buffy: The Vampire Slayer, to name a few. It's a world where fan expectation is intense, and because of the money involved, the art direction and commercial pressures can be daunting.

"It does make it more challenging, it doesn't make it more interesting," says Jon. "There's a huge expectation on the fans' part for the character to look a certain way and, especially if it's an actress like Sarah Michelle Gellar – she can have final say."

Body language is a main interest, he says. "The quirky little ways that you can hold your hand, or that a shoulder is tipped, or a head cocked or moved, or one shoulder up and one shoulder down. What interests me most is how to make it seem a little less static, a little less generic."

He comes up with poses and compositions by drawing numerous thumbnails, always searching for something different. For reference images, he'll often set the timer on his digital camera and pose himself.

Today, illustrating covers for books aimed at children and young adults is Jon's favourite kind of work. That, and storyboarding, an area he's become fascinated with as he feels he gets to use his storytelling skills while creating a lot of artwork in a short space of time.
www.jonfoster.com

Wise words

"Learn to quiet down your mind, especially the left temporal lobe. Learn to have some peace in your mind, to not listen to the self-doubt or procrastination voices that you might hear up there."

“I was doing all different kinds of subject matter with young adult books – with adult books, it's the same themes”

Donato Giancola

"If you need a label," says Donato Giancola, "then I'm a classical-abstract-realist working within the science fiction and fantasy genre."

Donato is a man extremely passionate about his work. His paintings transcend generations as well as genres – mixing Pre-Raphaelite realism with futuristic themes – and tying them together in epic, emotive compositions. But then he puts the hours in.

"I typically spend two to six hours on [preparation]. On a major project, that means finding the perfect model to pose, looking up vague descriptions of objects, or taking a few hours to browse through creative source books or references that have only the slightest tangential relationship to my commission."

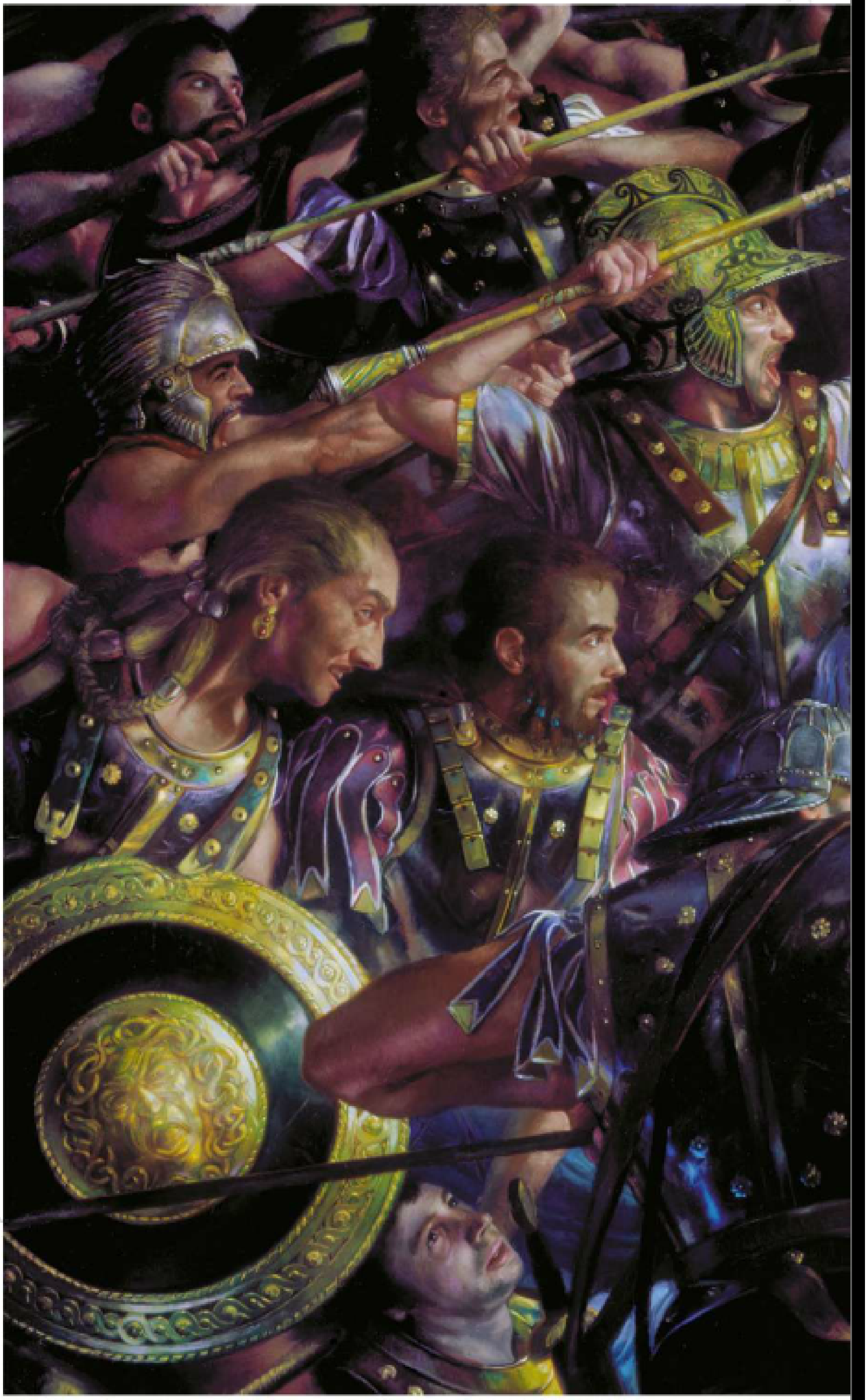
It certainly works. But Donato almost had a very different career. "I began college majoring in electrical engineering," he says. "It wasn't until my second year that I enrolled in an art course."

His passion for art includes museums. "I'm obsessed with visiting them," he smiles. "I moved to New York to be near museums. I spend many afternoons visiting my favourite artists – Hans Memling, Jan Van Eyck, Waterhouse, Vermeer, Ingres, Mondrian, Rembrandt, and Titian. I strive to comprehend their complexity." Like the artists who inspire him, there's no doubt Donato is a modern master.

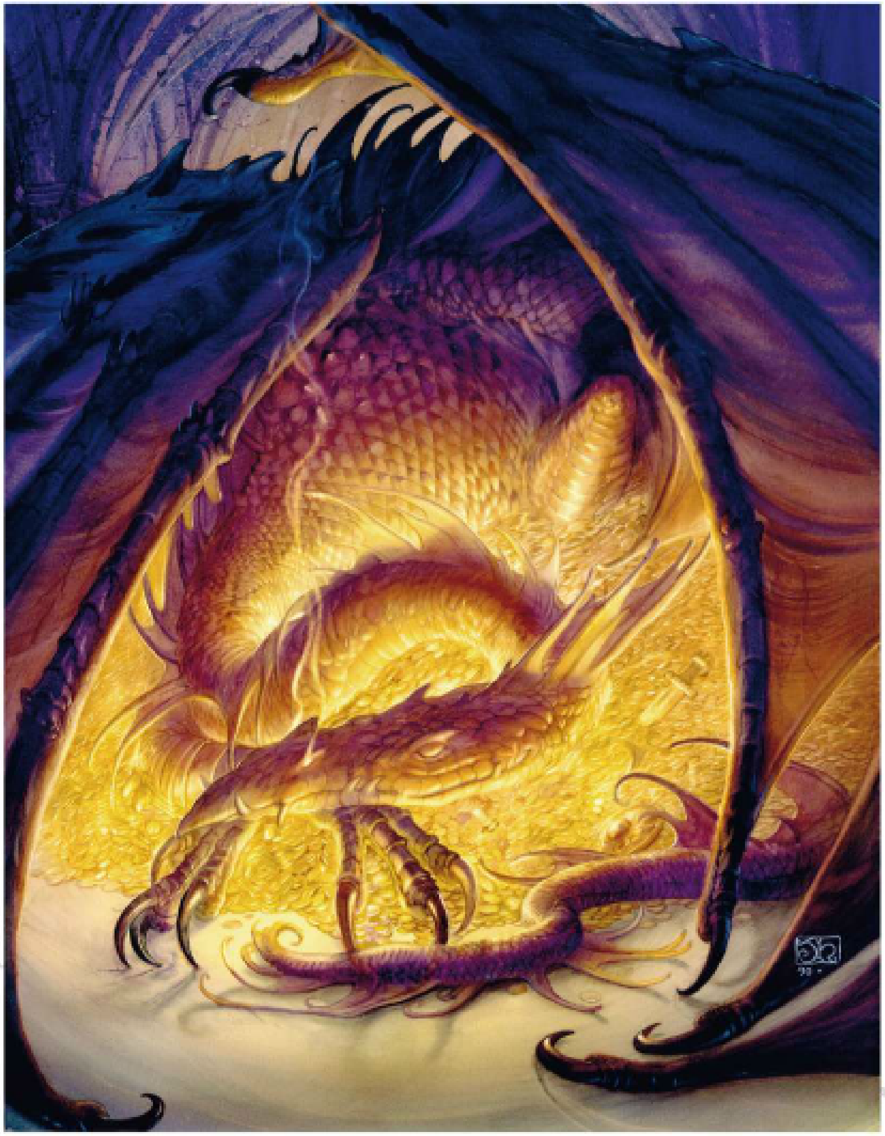
www.donatoart.com

Wise words

"One of my favourite ways of inspiring new concepts is to leave the studio. Many beautiful, imaginative and inspiring events happen around us – the best way to recharge creative energies."



John Howe



A legend in the fantasy art genre, John Howe has become the eyes to Tolkien's words. Since he discovered The Lord of the Rings in 1976, John has been drawing and painting the world of Tolkien, on book covers, posters, calendars and then in the Peter Jackson films.

"It was a unique experience – very exciting, lots of fun, loads of hard work – in New Zealand," says John. "It was very, very different to work with a huge team of talented people on a colossal project. There, it was really like being a small cog in a huge machine to help make it all trundle forwards until the final movie."

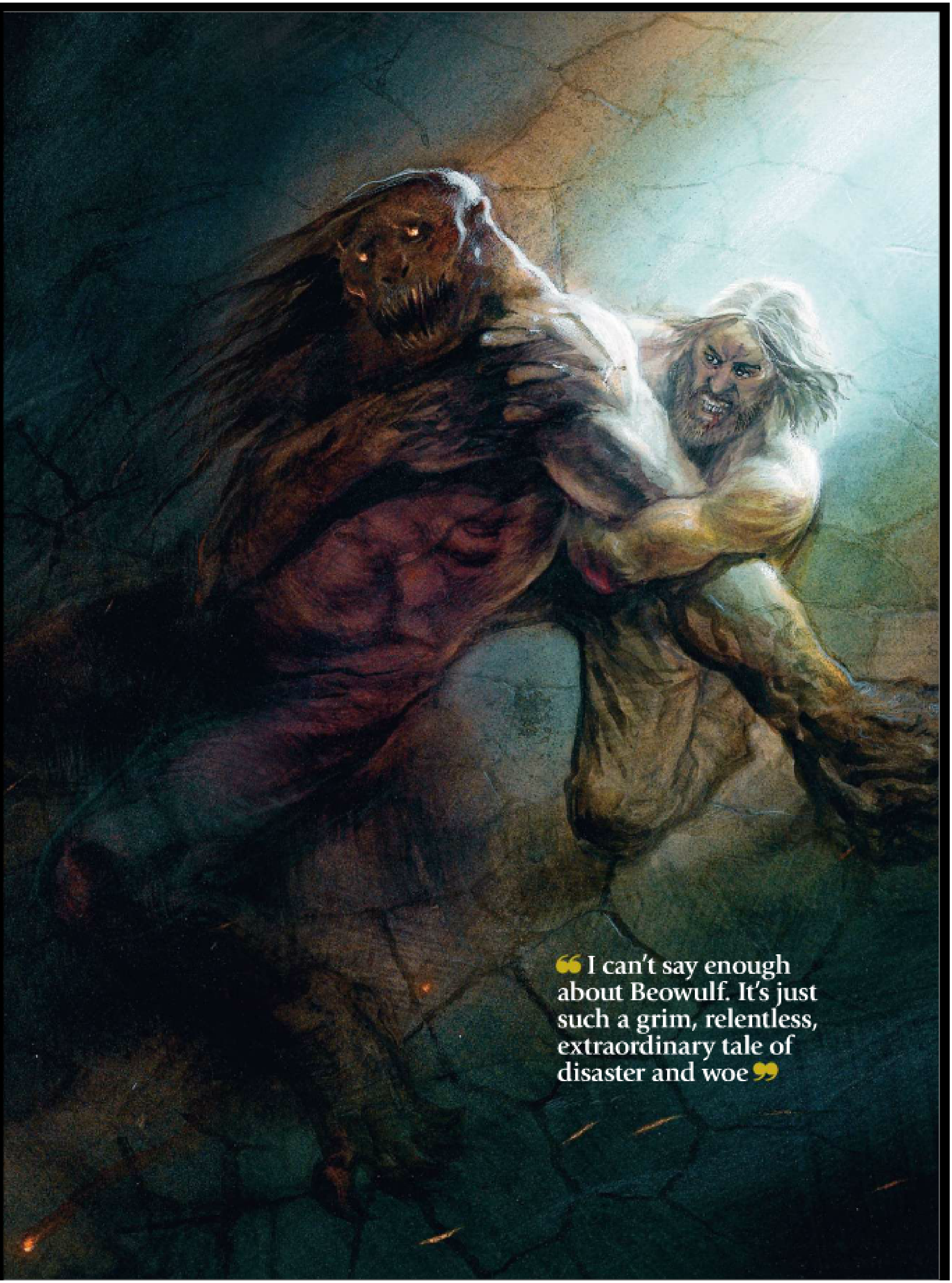
Perhaps the appeal and authenticity of John's work grows from his love of history. He has a great appreciation for archaeology, and collects and makes swords, shields and other implements from the medieval period.

"We don't wear cloaks any more, we don't wear hose, or leather boots, we don't wear chainmail or armour. To render it properly it's useful to know how it functions," he says. "How it wears, what boots look like if you walked a whole day in the dust, how you have to wear a sword in order to walk comfortably – all of those things are little tiny helpmates to give you a little more access to something convincing."

John is now back in New Zealand working on the film of The Hobbit, his adventure still in full stride.
www.john-howe.com

Wise words

"Draw things you don't know how to draw, and you'll grow."



“I can't say enough about Beowulf. It's just such a grim, relentless, extraordinary tale of disaster and woe”

Lucas Graciano

With no formal training, Lucas Graciano began painting caricatures at local theme parks in San Diego. After winning multiple awards at the 2002 National Caricaturist Network competition, he was directed towards the Watts Atelier to hone his drawing skills. Since turning professional the awards have kept coming, but of them all Lucas says entry into Spectrum for the first time early on in his career still ranks as a moment to treasure. "I'd been collecting that book for a long time and I knew it was the book to get your work into," says Lucas, as he recalls the moment he heard the good news. "I remember my friend, EM Gist, broke the news to me in class one night. I had a smile on my face for the rest of the evening."

More accolades followed, including a Chesley Award in 2010 for his painting, Silverwing, for Sony Online Entertainment's Legends of Norrath video game. "Oh man, that win was unexpected! There were some major contenders for that award," exclaims Lucas.

Although he also works in the video games industry, Lucas is one of the few artists in the field who still works traditionally. His background in drawing and traditional art techniques ensures his paintings have a strong grounding to build ideas around. "I strive to push the quality of my work in composition, rendering and storytelling," says Lucas.

Now teaching as well as freelancing, Lucas has one mantra that holds true: "There is no shortcut to experience." Follow this, and you could be picking up the awards.

www.lucasgraciano.com

Wise words

"Make sure you have a strong portfolio. Quality is better than quantity when it comes to your portfolio."

"Build as solid a base as possible and it will keep you more stable down the road"

© Sony Online Entertainment LLC

JP Targete

For the likes of NCSoft, Wizards of the Coast and Fantasy Flight Games, JP Targete journeys deep into his imagination, cuts off chunks of the netherworld and drags them kicking and screaming into this one. At least that's what it looks like from his art.

"It's extremely liberating working with fantastic themes," says JP. But there's a risk inherent: "It can detach you from reality at times."

Sure enough, those times of detachment are when you produce great work, but JP maintains one eye on the everyday too: "I try to observe the real world with both a technical and physical mindset, but also in an emotional and spiritual way."

JP is a digital and traditional illustrator, concept artist and art director for books and video games. But we all had to start off somewhere, and JP used to paint romance novel covers. "When I look back it's pretty horrifying. I can't believe I actually did that type of work!"

www.targeteart.com

Wise words

"Be yourself. Don't mimic your heroes' art – mimic their work ethics and successes, but not their work. If you're going to do your own brand of fantasy art, do it like no other. Put your mark on the genre by being as raw and original as possible."

> "I'm seeing the real world as a giant library of sight and feeling"

Jeff Simpson

Montreal-based artist Jeff Simpson is nothing if not passionate about his craft. For him, digital painting isn't about being decorative: it's about plumbing the murky depths of his imagination in order to challenge the viewer. Many of his mournful, vacant, often tortured-looking portraits are representations of real people. "I always prefer a photograph to base it on," he says. "I like to have a realistic style."

Though Jeff's style has developed in various directions, the sense of dark beauty that pervades his paintings was present from an early age. "My older works were much more rooted in fantasy or sci-fi, but usually with a very macabre element." This was largely down to the fact that he hated his job at the time and so channelled this frustration into creative energy.

While he generally keeps his commercial work, which includes the video game Assassin's Creed: Revelations, and personal work separate, he says it's the latter that really defines him as an artist. "But I think if my personal work became my actual work, I would be a happy man. Maybe it would completely ruin it for me, but I'd like to find out for myself first."

But where does he get the inspiration for his unique outlook? "I'm a fan of gritty, post-apocalyptic junk punk," he says. "I get to play with rusty metallic textures and cloth. I like things that look lived in: layers of history caked onto things."
www.bit.ly/j-simpson

Wise words

"Using references is a huge help to make pieces more interesting: you're extracting, interpolating and creating information from real life. You won't grow artistically without fresh sources."

"The things we find scary or inexplicable are more interesting: they invite us to think, wonder and question. I've failed if a work is simply pretty"

Ralph Horsley

Ralph always had an enthusiasm for painting, and drawing, but it was reading The Lord of the Rings and stumbling across Dungeons & Dragons that focused his many doodles. "I began depicting mighty warriors, enigmatic wizards and fearsome beasts," says Ralph.

Working freelance, Ralph has sought out like-minded clientele: one of his first clients was Games Workshop, and comics, illustrations, posters, concept art and covers followed from there.

Ralph's client list has since expanded to include EA, Paizo, Fantasy Flight Games, Green Ronin, Upper Deck – and Wizards of the Coast, "which gives me the great pleasure of working on Dungeons & Dragons and Magic: The Gathering".

"I feel very fortunate working on a range of products that enable me to evoke and dwell in those fantastical worlds I first explored during my childhood," he adds.
www.ralphhorsley.co.uk

"I'm very fortunate to work on products which let me evoke the fantastical"

Wise words

"To offset [all the detail in the painting, left] and provide a focal point, I chose a dominant light source. The vampire's staff enabled the strong shadow. It also provided drama, which I emphasised with the low viewpoint and tilted horizon."

Justin Sweet

It was 1970s comics Conan, Tarzan and the Hulk that got Justin Sweet into art – "guys that didn't really have a superpower but were just tough guys," he says.

At junior school Justin and a friend created their own role-playing game, called 'Treasures and Traps'. "We played D&D and that kind of thing, and we tended to draw our characters," he explains. But then American football took control of his passions for six years. Flattening opponents like an out-of-control juggernaut was beyond Justin's weight class, but he did make some progress. "I began to figure out what it meant to be aggressive, what it meant not to hesitate, and I think I've brought that with me through my career in art," he says. If something catches him "it gets every bit of blood in me".

When it was time for college, art was back on the agenda and, over the next five years, Justin developed an interest in spontaneity and mood. "Most of the stuff you do as a concept artist isn't really finished," explains Justin, "so my style was always quick and spontaneous."

Justin's ideal involves a crossover between media: "My better digital stuff is like watercolour in a way, because it has that same quick and rushed control. When you mix spontaneity with deliberateness in the right balance it can really… it's a difficult one to talk about," he says. "I could paint about it, though."
www.justinsweet.com

Wise words

"The computer is so cheap to make art on, people neglect how to really draw. The good comic book artists from way back, such as John Buscema – all these guys really knew how to draw."

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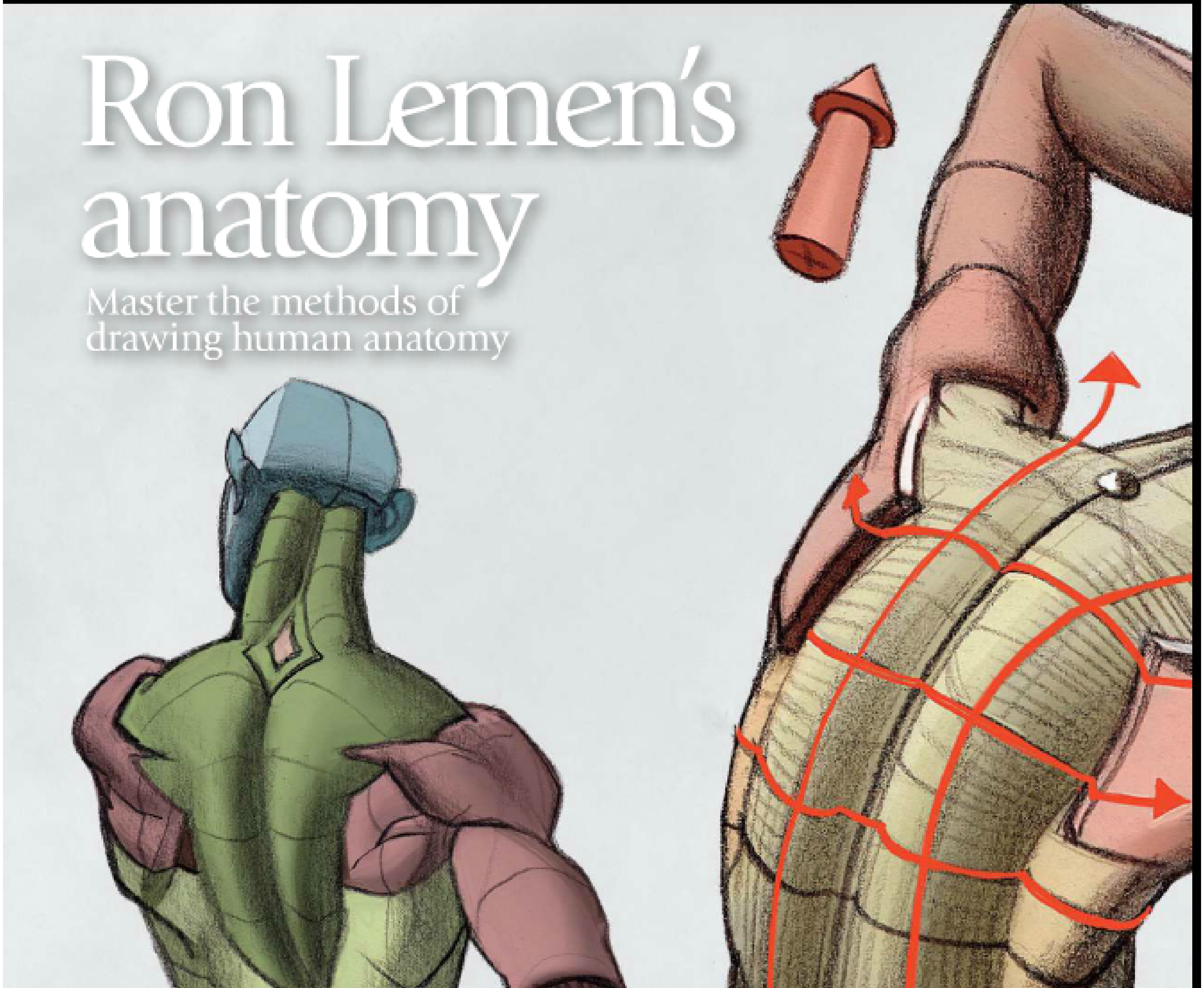
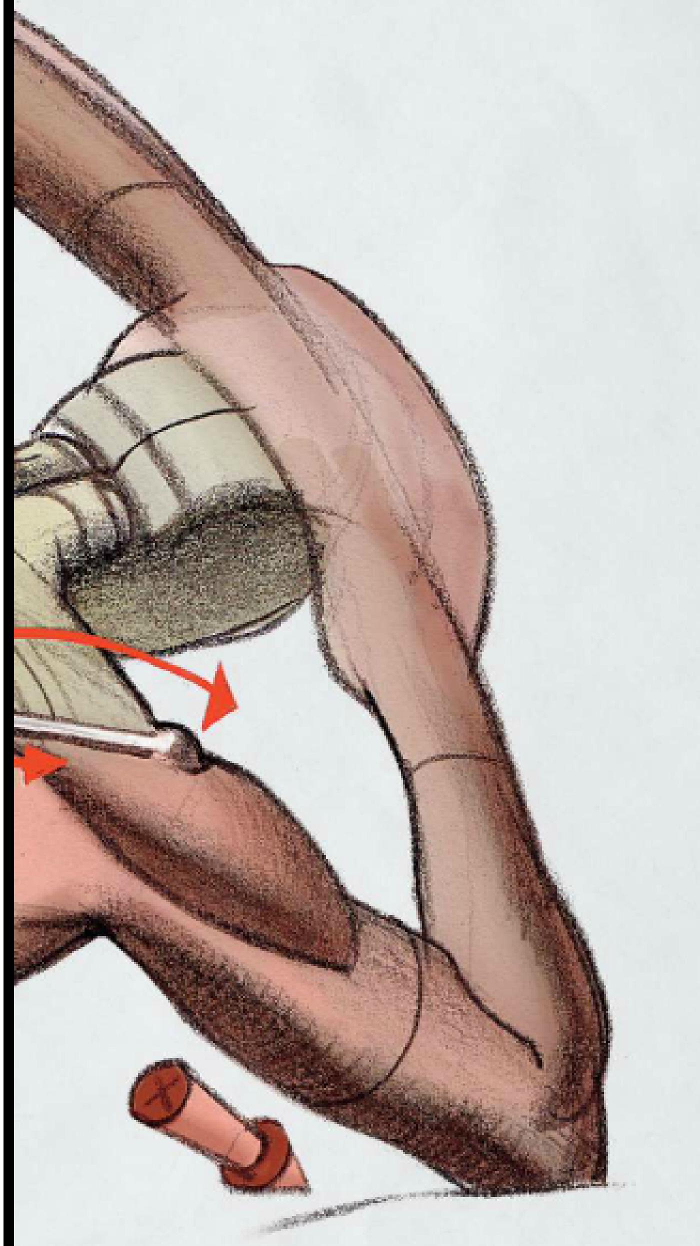
Ron Lemen's anatomy

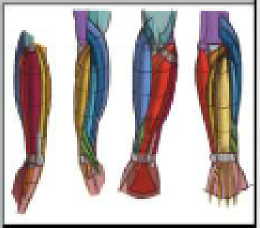
Master the methods of drawing human anatomy





Ron Lemen

A lecturer in anatomy and figure drawing, Ron Lemen is a passionate teacher and here he shares his techniques and methods for drawing accurate human figures from memory.

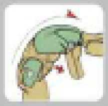


Learn the muscles of the arm and how they affect the wrist.
Turn to page 37

Workshops

How to draw human anatomy

22 Draw the shoulders
Learn the anatomy of the shoulders, simple shapes and symbols to make life easier and how to apply them.



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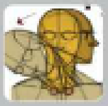
From boxes to blocks and skin folds, how to draw strong, realistically proportioned hips.



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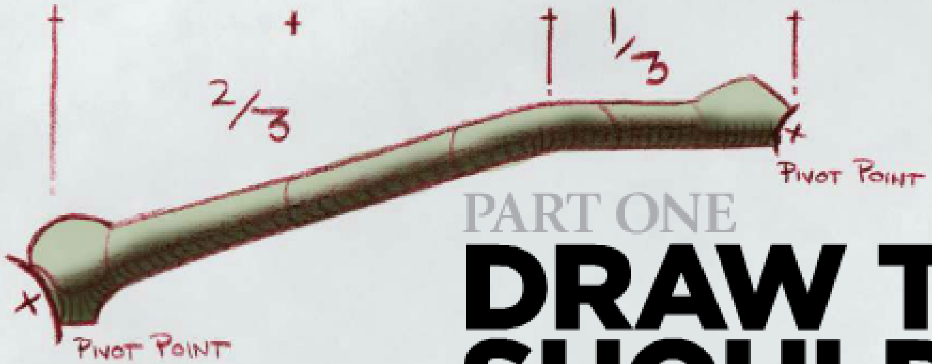
Draw clothed figures and how to understand the anatomy beneath.

58 How to draw imagined figures
Techniques to help draw figures from memory and the imagination.

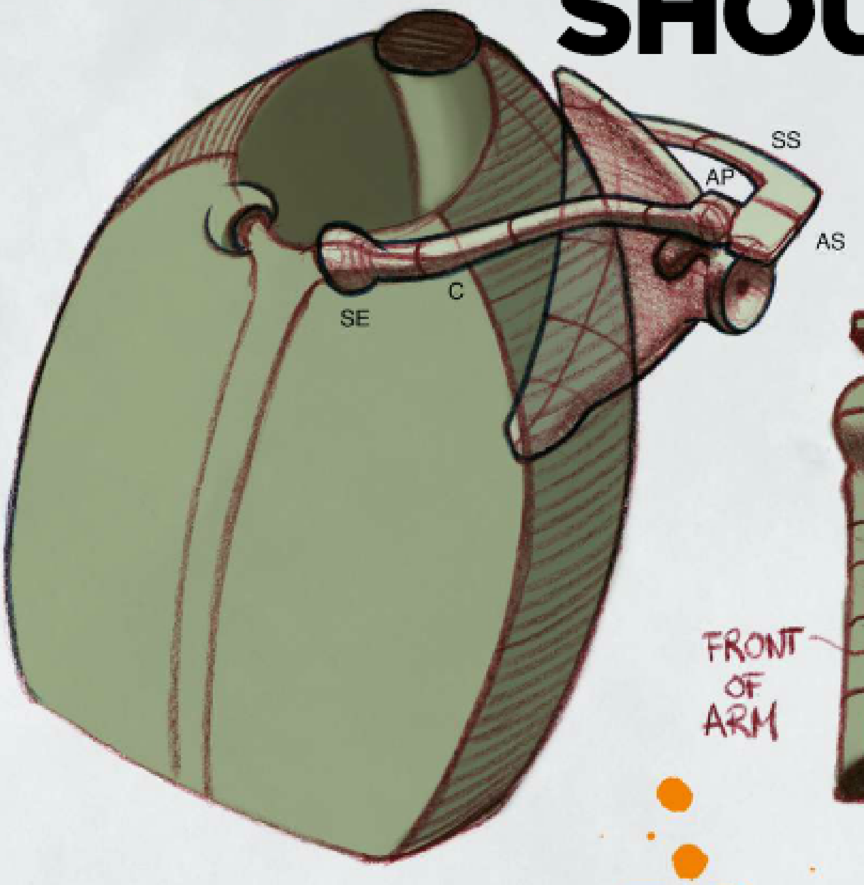
> Remember that figure drawing should be learned from life
>
> Ron Lemen, page 29



PART ONE

DRAW THE SHOULDERS

Learn how to make one of the more difficult areas of the human form easy to decipher and to draw, with **Ron Lemen**



> "Once these positions have been observed we can see the places to connect other shapes together"

Artist PROFILE

Ron Lemen
COUNTRY: US

See more of Ron's figure drawing work online.
www.studio2ndstreet.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifx-shoulders

1. SHOULDER SKELETON

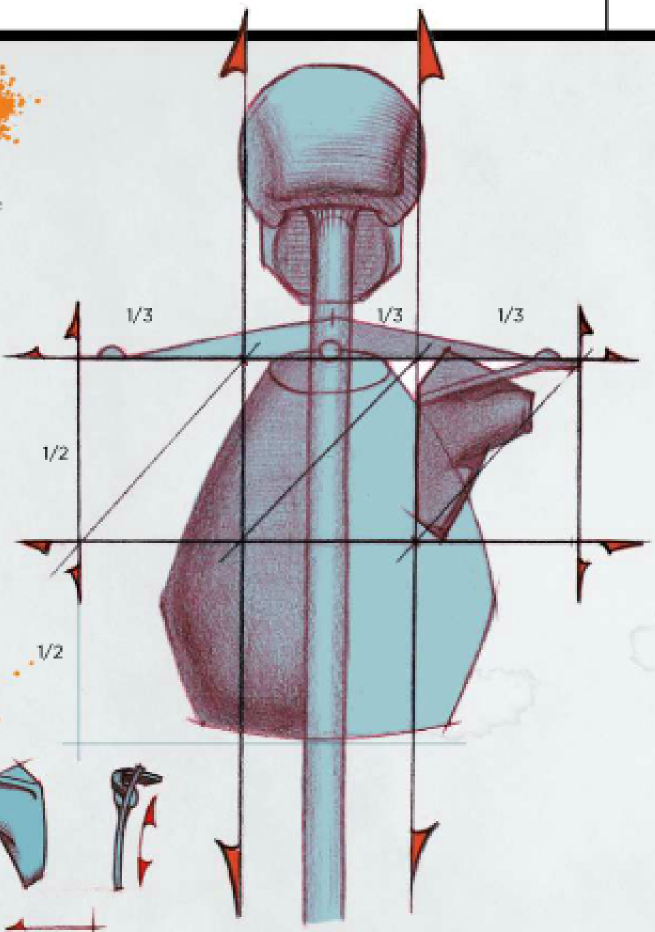
The skeleton is the key component for getting this invention method to work. Knowing how the bones are shaped and in what position they're in, based upon their shape and the action taken, is invaluable. Once these positions have been observed, the 'landmark' shapes identified, we can see the places to connect many other shapes together. These landmarks of the shoulders are the acromial shelves or edges (AS), the spines of the scapula's (SS), and their medial edges (ME), the clavicles (C) their sternal end (SE) and the acromion process (AP).

These landmarks do not always appear, because of body weight and physique, the activity and pose taken as well as viewer's position. Regardless of whether they are seen or not they exist and have a place in space. We want to find these landmarks so we can put the rest of the body together with ease and speed.

2. MEASURING THE SHOULDERS

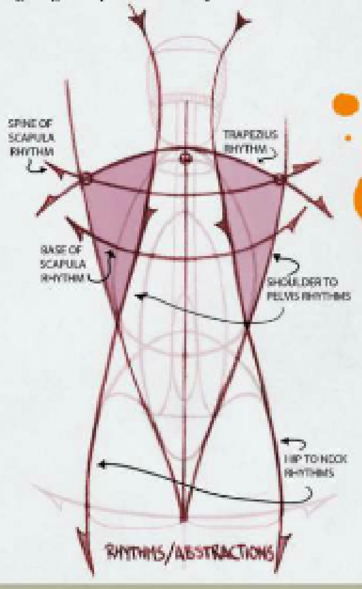
We can estimate and find measurements from ideal proportions as a starting point to any pose. There are several different approaches to measuring, but all of them involve order and memory. Idealising has a set of tools that can be memorised, although you have to learn and memorise this by drawing from life and not just learning formulas. The figures will always end up stiff and formulaic if you don't relate them to reality and learn how to distort and push the ideal into a solid likeness.

The head is two-thirds the height of the ribcage. From our ideal of the skull as a 2:3 ratio, we can establish a height and width of the skull. The width of the widest part of the skull is roughly the same width as the distance between the scapulas. The height of the scapulas is roughly half the height of the ribcage. This makes the space between the scapulas and the size of the scapula roughly a square unit of measure. This equals three units of measure across from acromion process to acromion process. From this ideal you can then tweak the width of the shoulders to accommodate a male or female, a god or goddess, hero or fool, weak or powerful. The pectorialis is connected to two-thirds the length of the clavicle and the deltoid is connected to the furthest one-third of its own length, reaching out to its acromion process.



3. MEASURING THE SCAPULA

From the square unit of measure established above, we can divide this square diagonally in half, and this is our ideal shape and space for the scapula. From acromial shelf to medial edge, top to bottom. Now, the scapula is not a perfect square unit of measure, however, to confidently draw such a complex space we need a starting point. This diagram to the right that shows the process for designing a scapula from a square.



A Find the scapulas

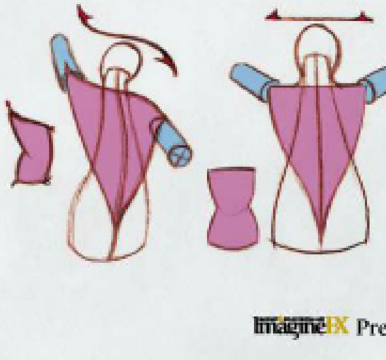
Start with the figure abstraction to find the torso, then the rhythms from the shoulders to the pelvis and the neck to the hips, where they crossover each other block out the space the scapulas sit within. There are also two other sub-rhythms that can be found crossing the back to relate the spines of the scapulas as well as their bases. There is another rhythm line across the back to design out the trapezius muscles, too.

4. RHTHYMS OF THE SHOULDERS

Rhythms occur in every way within our process of drawing, from rhythmical starting abstractions to the rhythms we design for the folds in the skin. Everything we draw relating the human form will have some rhythmical association between the parts in every action we consciously take. Movement is fluid, finding the linking rhythmic lines can make constructing the human form from memory easier.

B Rhythms change

Depending upon the arms' movements, the trapezius rhythm can change from an arc to a straight line to an S curve to a mix. The set of rhythms here are a starting point, and every action the model takes will dictate a new set of individual rhythms for you to discover and design in your art.

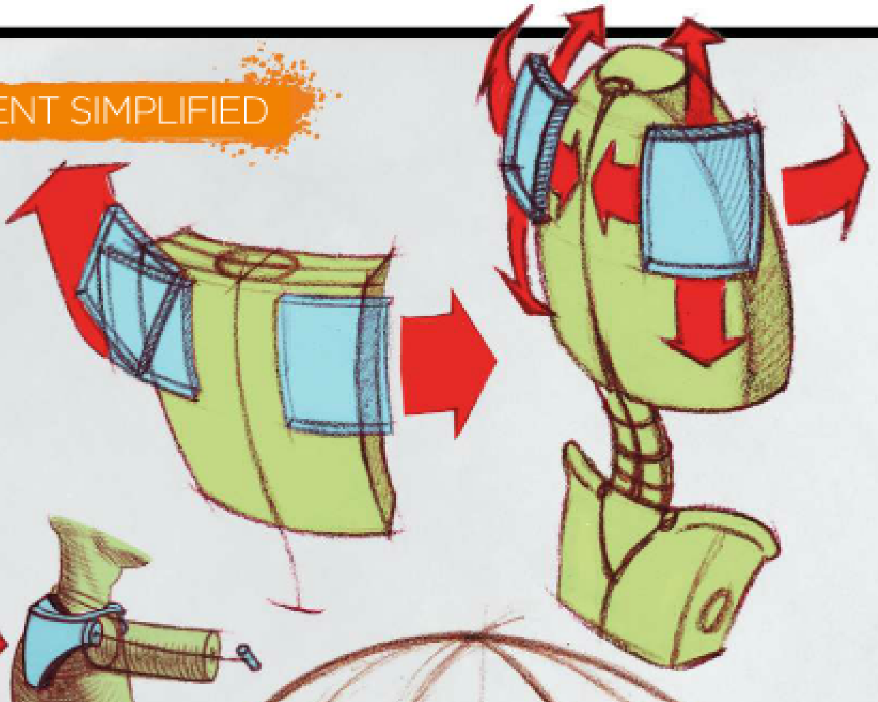


C Strong centre

Here is another simple geometric rhythm we can use when the figure is in profile. The neck and the arm flow together both at the back and the front. This rhythm can help visually connect these elements together for a stronger harmony amongst all the separate pieces of the neck and arm.

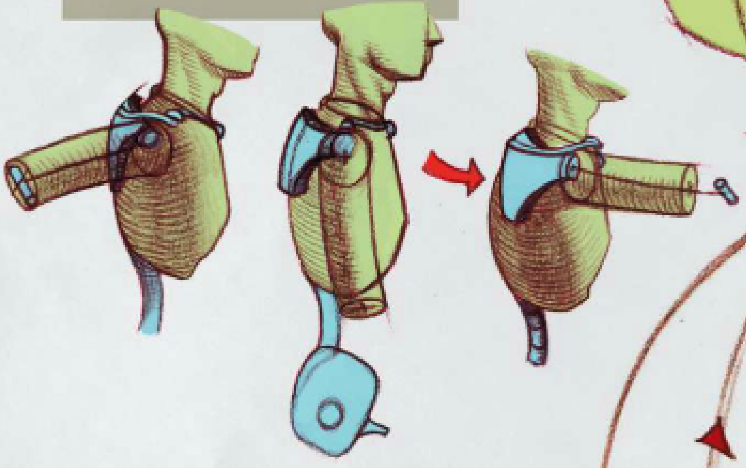
5. SHOULDER MOVEMENT SIMPLIFIED

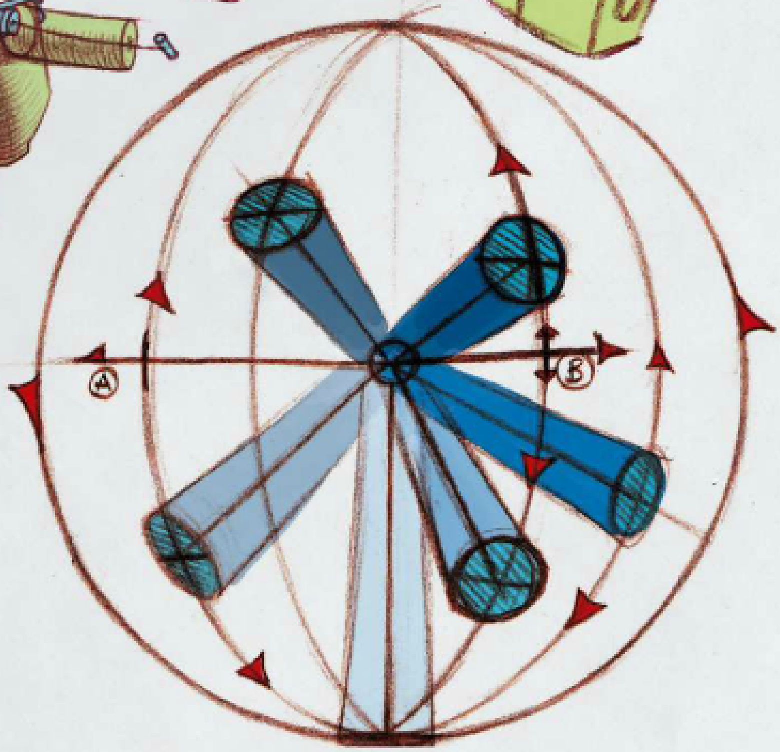
The scapula is a very fluid area of the body and affects how other parts move, for example the arms. Knowing how the scapula moves and interacts, learning its patterns and motions, will enable you to draw other body sections, such as arms, more easily. This can even offer more insight into foreshortening.



A Scapula movement

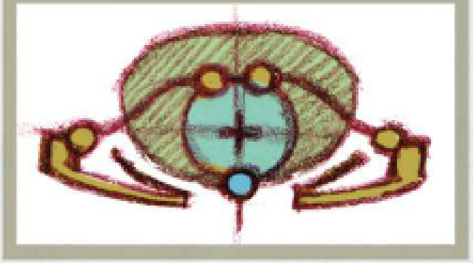
First let's look at how the scapula moves. Here are a few drawings showing the scapulas in simple squares and some designed in triangles, the arrows describe the directions the scapulas can travel in.

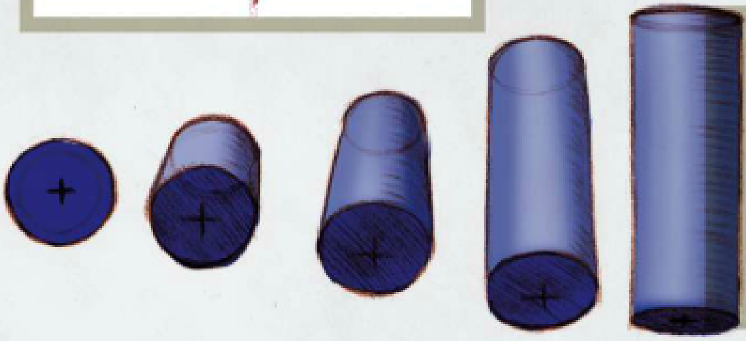




B Scapula diagram

Scapulas can move all over because they are not attached to any surface other than at the acromion shelf and process. This is the only anchor for the scapula, and because the arm is only attached at the stemum by the clavicle, this gives the arm quite a bit of freedom to move about the side of the body. It allows the arm to cross over the front and back of the torso with ease and less obstruction from the ribcage. It is easier to see this connection in the cross section drawing.





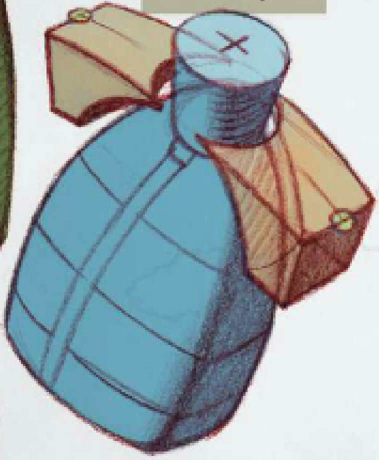
C The shoulder and foreshortening

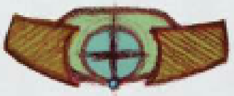
The arm circumducts or circles around a pivot point like a wobbly prop on an airplane. We can get a fluid motion but the arm does not easily rotate a full 360 degrees. To draw this movement we need to learn foreshortening. Knowing that the upper arm is the length of the ribcage, we can start where the shoulder and elbow are in a neutral position (called 'reference'), to take a measurement of the upper arm's length. Now from the pivot point of where the shoulder will be positioned we can rotate that length elliptically until we find what we are looking for, and then solidify the mass around that line as a cylinder.

The chart above might look confusing at first. But keep in mind that all of the arcs drawn are the pathways the arm might follow along that elliptical track. Start with a line projecting from the head of the humerus, and let it cross the path of the elliptical movement (A). Then draw the crosshairs or the minor to the major axis of the ellipse that we use as the volume of the arm (B). Then draw the ellipse that represents the pitch of the arm cylinder and continue drawing out your muscle forms on the cylinder form.

6. SHAPES AND SYMBOLS

A key way to make drawing the body and its anatomy easier when, particularly, drawing from memory is to break the forms down into simple shapes and symbols. Drawing the shoulders is no different.

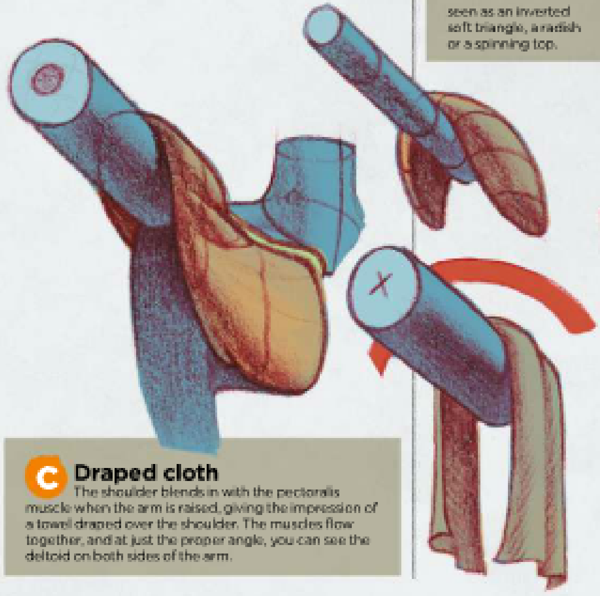




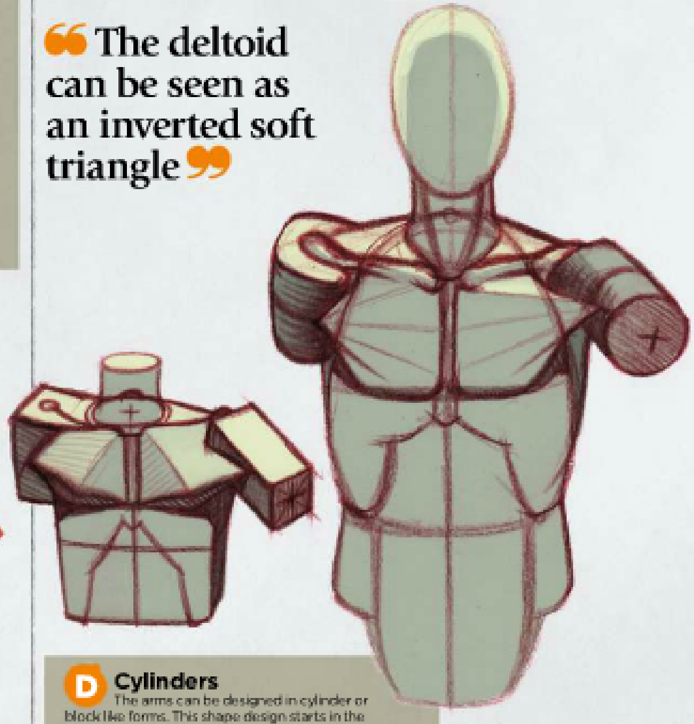
A blocks We can imagine the shoulders as blocks on either side of a neck cylinder.

B Triangles This shape blocks out the clavicle to scapula, around the corner across the acromial shelf-line and it also roughly blocks out the space of the deltoid mass. This mass is about one-third of the height of the ribcage and both blocks merge together to make the top plane of the torso. And, it just so happens, that the deltoid attaches one-third of the way down the humerus – your upper arm bone! The deltoid can be seen as an inverted soft triangle, a radish or a spinning top.

> "The deltoid can be seen as an inverted soft triangle"



C Draped cloth The shoulder blends in with the pectoralis muscle when the arm is raised, giving the impression of a towel draped over the shoulder. The muscles flow together, and at just the proper angle, you can see the deltoid on both sides of the arm.



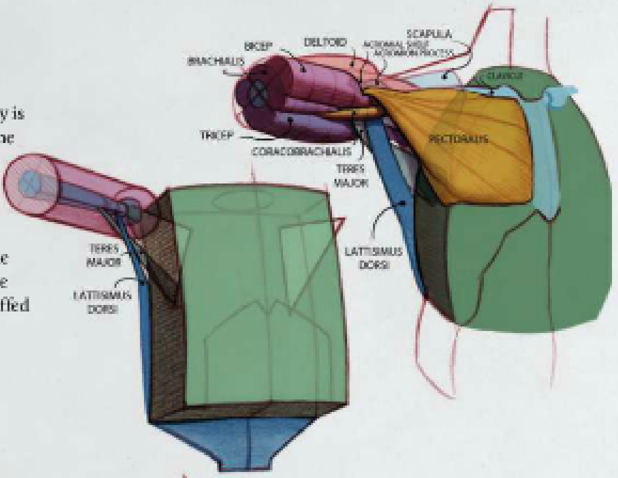
D Cylinders The arms can be designed in cylinder or block like forms. This shape design starts in the shoulders and travels down into the hand. In either case, the acromion process sits in the middle of the shape. Simple shapes are easier to remember!

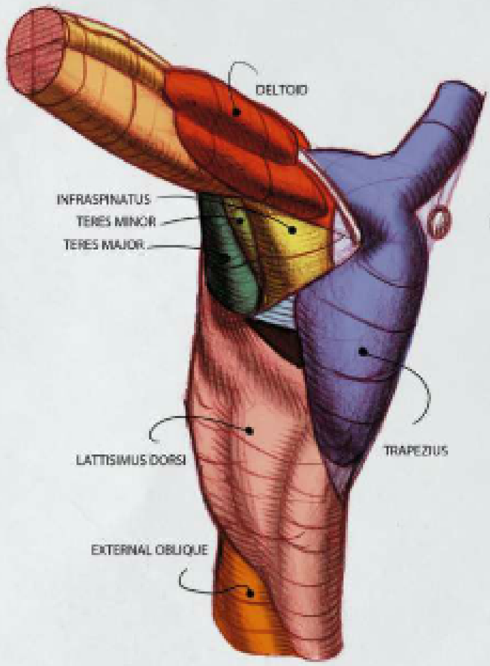
7. ANATOMY

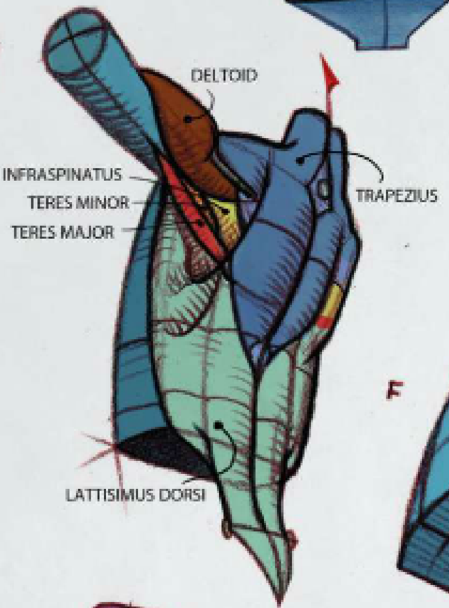
The muscles of the shoulder are: the deltoid, the supraspinatus, the infraspinatus, the teres major and the teres minor. These muscles weave, along with the lattisimus, around the coracobrachialis and the tricep complicating matters in designing the space when drawing the figure.

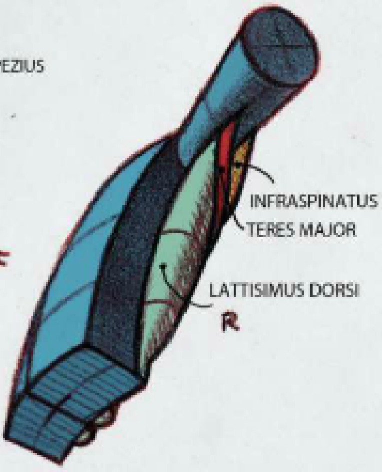
On this page are some images to help simplify a complex area. When the arm is fully extended to the side of the body, the angle that bridges the arm to the body is made up of both the lattisimus and the teres major. The teres major is the tail end extending out onto the arm, and the lattisimus is the tail end extending onto the ribcage.

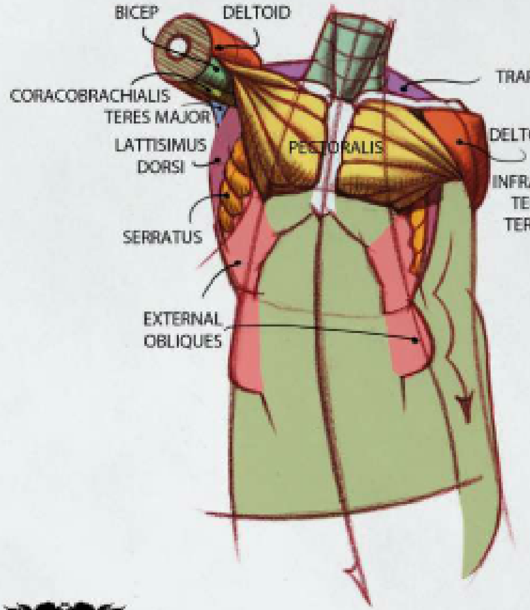
Below is also a diagram to show the idealised stretching movements of the deltoid. These are for drawing big, buffed hero types, always keep the anatomy correct when drawing superheroes.

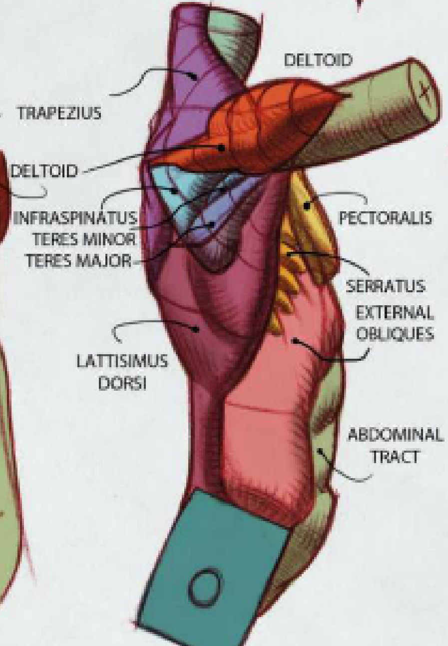


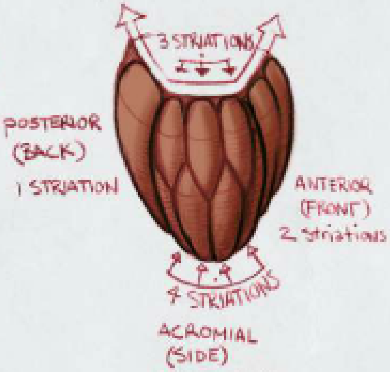












> **"Keep the anatomy correct when drawing superheroes"**

8. HOW THE MUSCLES WORK

The deltoid rotates and raises the arm. The front head pulls the arm forward and rotates it inward, while the back head pulls the arm backwards and rotates it outward. The supraspinatus lifts the arm laterally and helps with the outward rotation. This muscle is also buried under the trapezius and attached to the top of the humerus. The infraspinatus rotates the arm laterally and extends the raised arm. This is attached to the top of the humerus. The teres minor pulls the arm in and rotates it outward, while the teres major pulls the arm towards the body and rotates it inward, lowering the raised arm.

PRO TIPS

It's connected

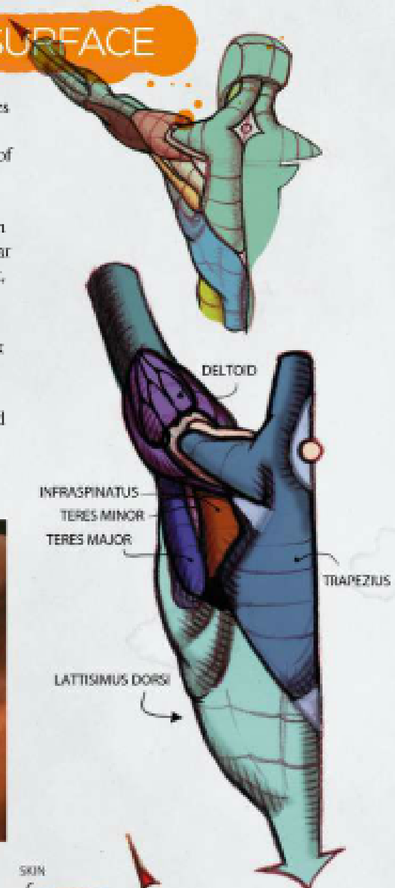
Start from the core of the pose, the torso, and then build the legs, arms, neck and head. It will save you so much trouble in the end of getting the pose to feel active. That pillow shape is key. It tweaks how we draw the shoulders, sometimes pushing the expression even further because the ribcage is turned harder away from the line of action. Thinking about the ribcage and pelvis together, understanding everything is connected, really does make for a stronger shoulder action.

10. THE SKIN AND SURFACE

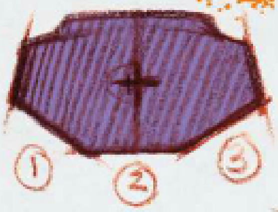
The skin loosely slides over the muscles bones and tendons. It is attached by a fascia or an under layer that is connected to the surfaces of the bones, muscles and tendons.

When the arms are active, the skin on the shoulders stresses depending upon the action and its direction. The skin folds perpendicular to the muscle fibres. If the arm is drawn back, the shoulders will stress and folds will form. These folds can be drawn using a spiral, the more intense the spiral, the more drawn back the arm will look.

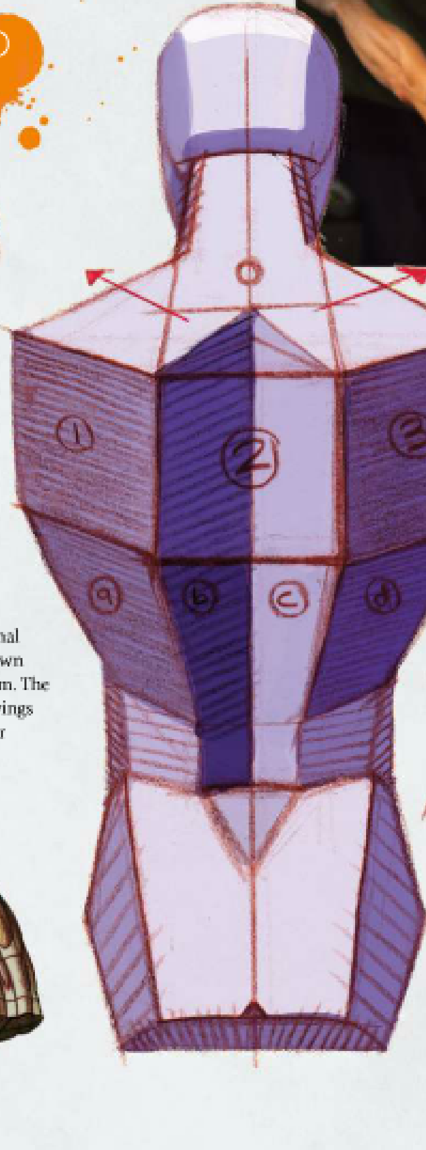
When the arm is lifted above the shoulder line the skin folds over the acromial shelf and the acromion process. This creates a crease that softly squares out, generating a box-like insertion into the deltoid muscle.

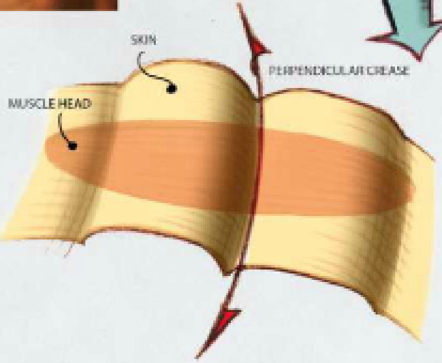


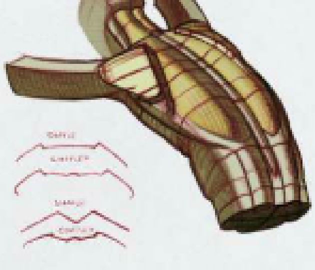
9. PLANES AND SURFACES



The back can be broken down into a series of three larger planes in both horizontal and vertical directions. The middle of the back will not have the angles that the muscles take when first sketched, just three simple flat planes to help visualize the bigger facets for stronger relatable proportions, before the details disguise them. Once these planes are built out, we then subdivide the surface into smaller facets. The scapulas, the spinal muscles and the spine all get their own surfaces as we can see in this diagram. The line drawings are cross section drawings of the planes to better visualize their dimension and depth.







EXERCISE

When drawing the back, sketch several pillow shapes and then find the ribcage shape within the pillow. Divide this shape in half. This is the height of the scapulas in the back. Now divide your pillow shape into thirds from shoulder to shoulder. You will see the spaces for the scapulas if the arms are at the sides of the body. Inside the shoulder squares, divide the space into two halves using the diagonal from corner to corner, the pointy end should be towards where the arm goes. Draw a line next to the body attached to the pointy end of the triangle, and then place a little line at the end of this, perpendicular to its length, making an upside down capitol T. Divide the length of the arm line into thirds. Put the shoulder muscles on the body according to the divisions given. Practice until you think you can do it by memory, then, draw another page of pillows, ribcages and arms.

Back to basics: there's a big difference between drawing a male and a female back shape.

“Figure drawing should be learned from life – to understand the process, memorise the formulas and poses”

PART TWO

DRAWING AND POSING THE BACK

The back is a complex space, so **Ron Lemen** breaks it down into conceptual formulas to make drawing and posing it easier

Artist PROFILE

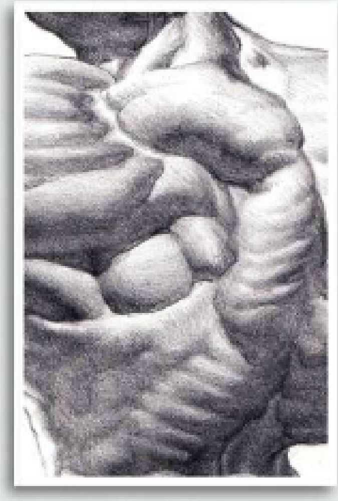
Ron Lemen
COUNTRY: US

Ron Lemen is a freelance artist and instructor who's worked in fine art, illustration and the entertainment industry. He teaches drawing and painting classes, both traditional and digital, at Studio 2nd Street.
www.studio2ndstreet.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifz-back

In this workshop I'm aiming to help clear up all the confusion the back, a complex area of the body, can sometimes cause us artists. I've also included a step process and some exercises that I hope you'll try. I'm going to go over two different techniques that I find are identical in so many ways, and yet each finds something very important in figure drawing that I think you'll find interesting.

After reading this tutorial – along with the shoulders workshop (see page 22) – I hope you understand where I'm going with all of this and can use new techniques and thought processes to your advantage. Remember that figure drawing should be learned from life. To better understand the process, memorise the formulas and poses, and work through a rigorous repetitious process to fully develop our skills.

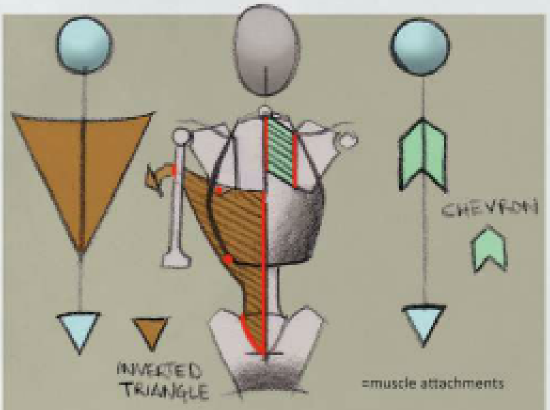


Rhomboid, trapezius, latissimus dorsi, external obliques, the sacrospinalis group… the back is one of, if not the, most complex parts of the anatomy. Though you won't need to learn Latin or do a biology degree to be able to paint it well.

1. BACK MUSCLE GROUPS

First off, let's look at the muscles and come up with some simple shapes to help remember what they look like and how they fit together. The back muscles or groups of muscles we artists are interested in are the rhomboid, trapezius, latissimus dorsi, external obliques and the sacrospinalis group.

The muscles of the back are broken up into groups. Combining the left and the right side of the body together to create the shapes we will be using to design the back with. These are the basic shapes of our figure construction. The points of origin and insertion points are painted with red on the charts provided.

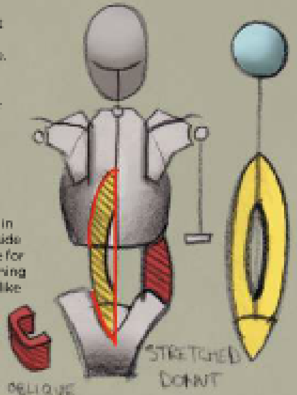


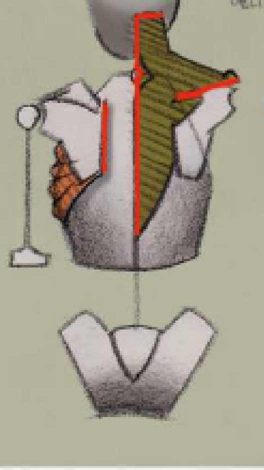
A Rhomboids

The rhomboids (above) sit under the trapezius muscle and connect the scapulas to the spine. They are slider muscles and they draw the scapulas in towards the spine. Here we use a chevron-like shape for the basic construction.

B Sacrospinalis

The long sacrospinalis muscles (right) are column-like muscles, although they terminate in more of an arch and sit on either side of the spine – they are responsible for pulling the body up and straightening it out. The basic shape looks a bit like a stretched out doughnut.

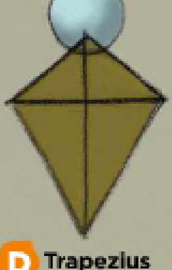




C Latissimus dorsi

The latissimus dorsi muscles (left) are the cape muscles on the back. They start at the spine, connect to the bottom of the scapula and the bottom of the ribcage, and end on the front of the humorus (arm). These are extender muscles, which pull the arms behind the body. Their basic shape is an inverted triangle.

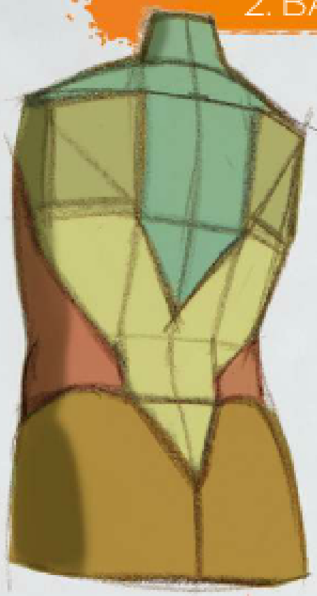
Our scapulas are also connected to the ribcage by the serratus muscles. The serratus muscles start on the inside edge of the scapulas and connect to the first nine ribs of the ribcage. This slider muscle group pulls the arm forward. The shapes we can design to more easily explain these muscles are a fan-like shape, or a nine-fingered hand grasping the side of our body, the fingers extended around the form.



D Trapezius

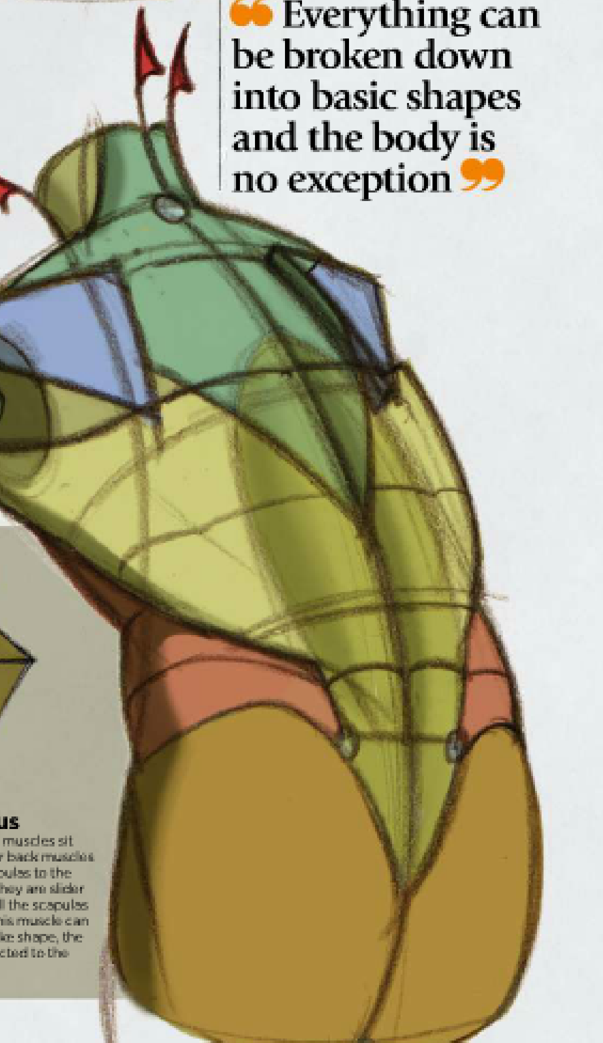
The trapezius muscles sit on top of all the other back muscles and connect the scapulas to the spine and the skull. They are slider muscles and they pull the scapulas towards the spine. This muscle can be started as a kite-like shape, the top of the kite connected to the base of the skull.

2. BASIC SHAPES



Everything can be broken down into basic shapes and the body is no exception. Once we learn how to control these shapes, shade them, draw them in perspective and overlap them with each other, we can apply them to any figure we see or imagine – the ultimate goal is to draw upon ideas from the imaginative process. If we stick with basic construction concepts, the most complex of designs can be simply drawn again and again. But this is a process, and each stage, must be completed before the next can successfully be applied. Once you have practised the process enough, then hopefully you'll find a way to make the process intuitive and your own – or rather than sticking to every step, you'll find a creative way to over-step or combine the steps and make the process your own that way.

> "Everything can be broken down into basic shapes and the body is no exception"



3. GESTURE DRAWING

The first step in this drawing process is to start with a gesture drawing, loose and rhythmical. This is a rough rendition of the pose, allowing us to play with the action and the gravity before investing time in measuring and shading. The gesture should resemble the finished drawing, using all the tools we will be discussing, but with no deliberate intention of making anything solid and dimensional.

PRO TIPS

Messy lines

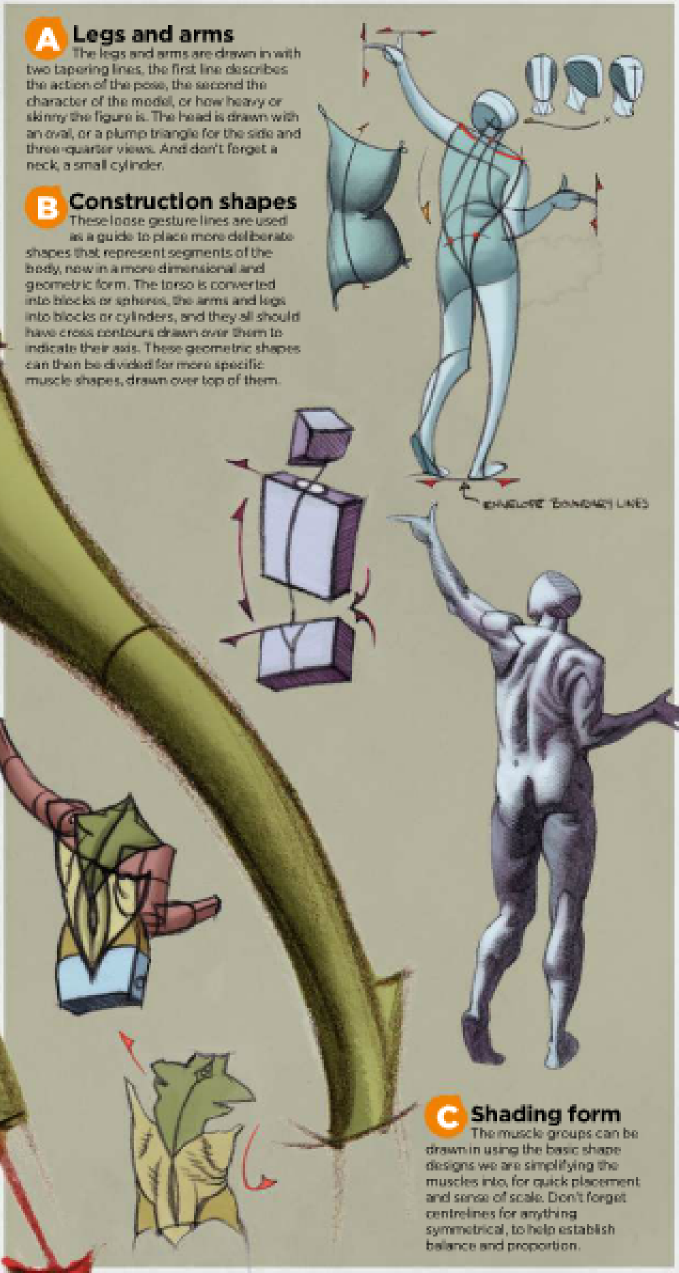
Start with simple shapes. First, simple shapes are easier to move (or what I call 'animate') to correct the gesture, which means you are moving the body parts to a better position for either a more convincing action or for more clarity of the silhouette. Second, we invest time in our work. Erasing something that took time to render is not something we easily do and can stubbornly refuse to, at the loss of a good drawing.

Simple Shapes

The ellipses I draw around the body and limbs help me see the volumes of the body with greater clarity. Drawing is all 2D, so any tool that helps me visualise or see the dimensions I'm designing to, will make my drawing feel more convincing and I don't stress out as much. Simplifying the body into simple geometry and/or drawing cross contours and centrelines on the shapes I make are just a few ways to help me visualise the dimensions and volumes.

4. TORSO DRAWING

The torso can be gestured in using a shape resembling a pillow. The top two corners represent the acromion processes, or the little bumps on the shoulders. The bottom two corners represent the greater trochanters, or the bumps that stick out on our thigh bones. The crease in the pillow indicates which direction the body is bending, and also represents the bottom of the ribcage. When drawing this shape make both halves of the bent side equal in length. The figure abstraction is similar, in that it finds the top and the bottom of the torso, using triangles to connect the same points of anatomy. The neck is a part of this abstraction, and from the front the nipples are mapped into the lines; from the back, the scapulas. The key to either of these torso concepts working well is animation.



A Legs and arms

The legs and arms are drawn in with two tapering lines, the first line describes the action of the pose, the second the character of the model, or how heavy or skinny the figure is. The head is drawn with an oval, or a plump triangle for the side and three-quarter views. And don't forget a neck, a small cylinder.

B Construction shapes

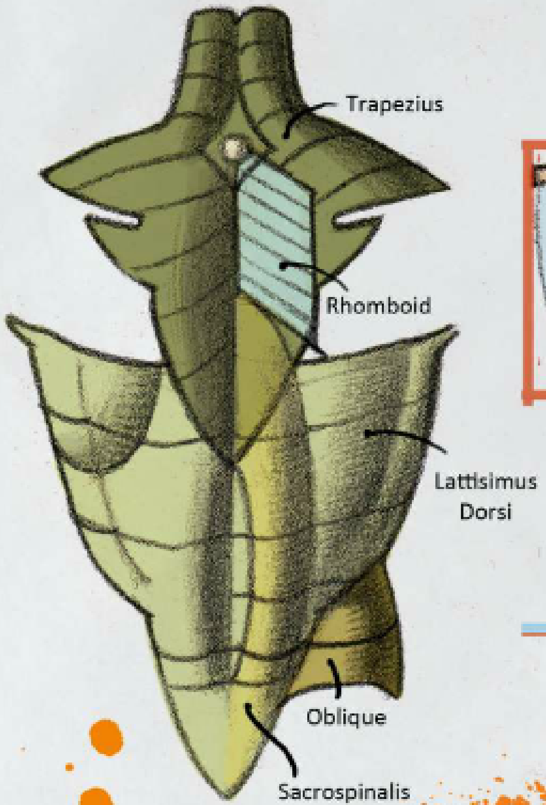
These loose gesture lines are used as a guide to place more deliberate shapes that represent segments of the body, now in a more dimensional and geometric form. The torso is converted into blocks or spheres, the arms and legs into blocks or cylinders, and they all should have cross contours drawn over them to indicate their axis. These geometric shapes can then be divided for more specific muscle shapes, drawn over top of them.

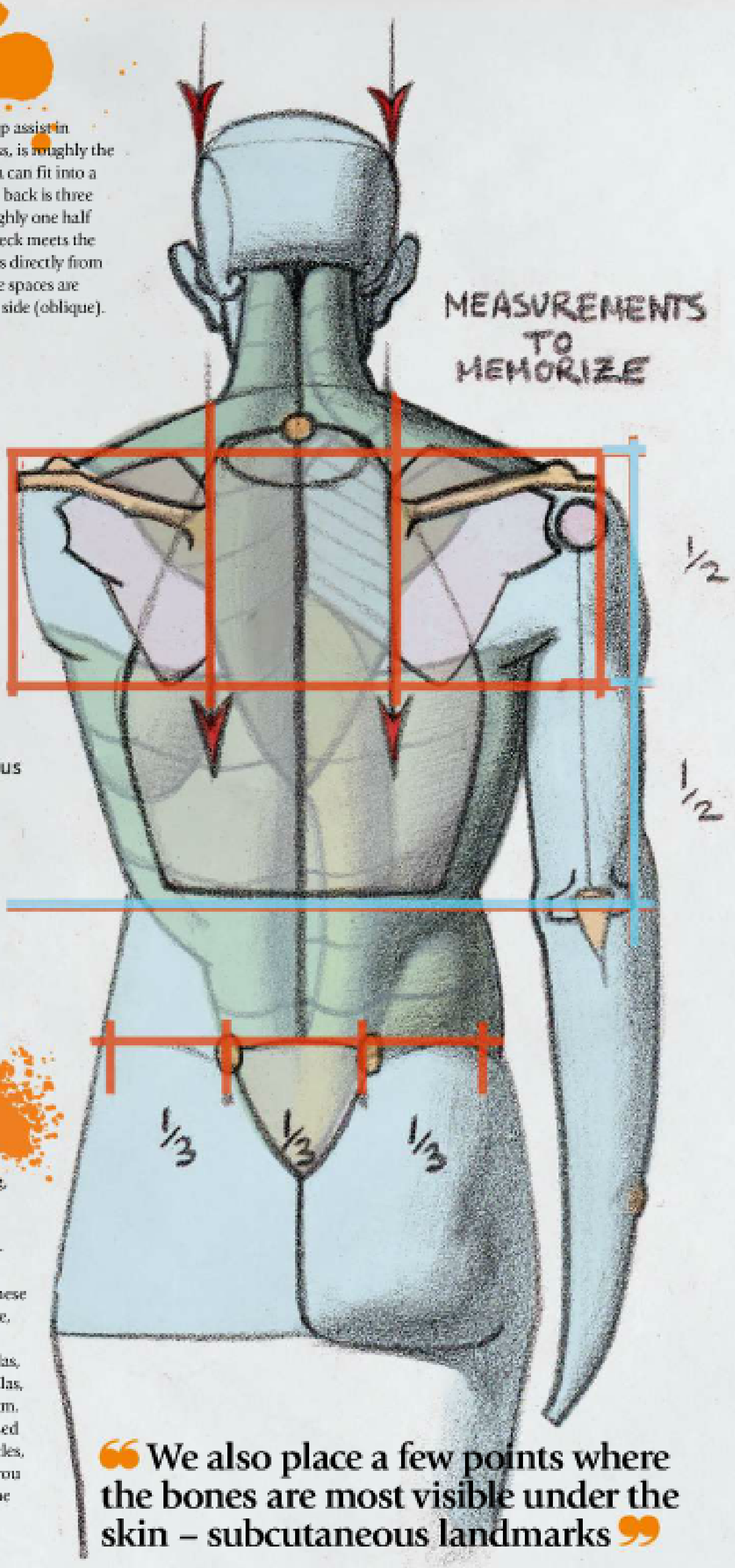
C Shading form

The muscle groups can be drawn in using the basic shape designs we are simplifying the muscles into, for quick placement and sense of scale. Don't forget centrelines for anything symmetrical, to help establish balance and proportion.

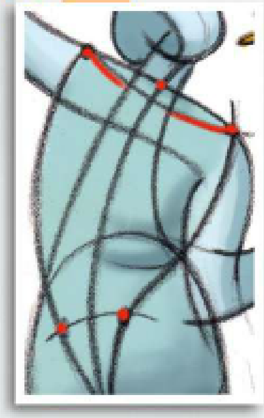
5. BACK MEASUREMENTS

Focusing on the back, let's take some measurements that will help assist in building this space. First, the back of the skull, or the cranial mass, is roughly the same width as the separation between the scapulas. Each scapula can fit into a perfect square and including the space between the scapulas, the back is three of these squares from shoulder to shoulder. The scapulas are roughly one half the height of the ribcage from the C7 (where the bottom of the neck meets the shoulder) to the 10th rib. When attaching the lower back muscles directly from behind, to the sacrum and iliac crest, the divisions between these spaces are roughly three-quarter between side (oblique), sacrum and other side (oblique).





6. SET MARKERS

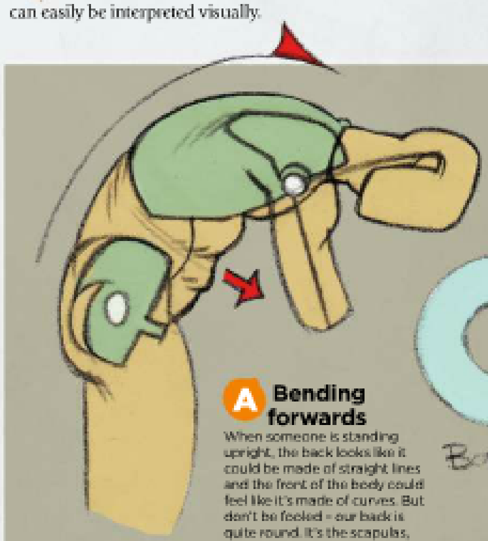


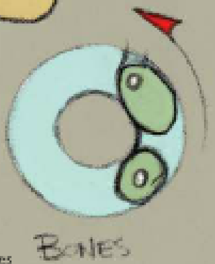
In addition to the measuring, we also want to place a few points where the bones are most visible under the skin – we call these subcutaneous landmarks. From the back these points are the C7 of the spine, the acromion processes, the spines or wings of the scapulas, the inside edges of the scapulas, and the dimples of the sacrum. In addition to these being used as landmarks to attach muscles, they are also useful to help you measure, especially across the figure, for symmetrical evaluation, too.

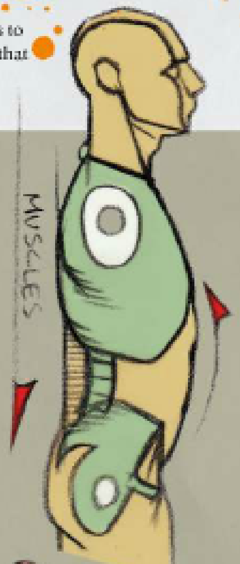
> "We also place a few points where the bones are most visible under the skin – subcutaneous landmarks"

7. DRAWING BACK POSES

Following the construction stages, it's now time for the tonal stage. Now our focus is to construct and assemble any pose, simplifying it down into the most basic abstracts that can easily be interpreted visually.

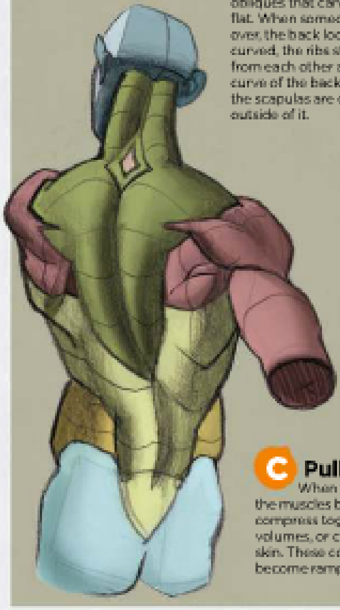


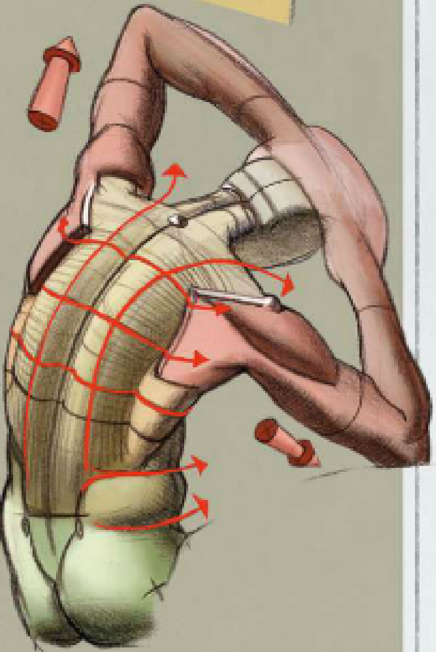




A Bending forwards

When someone is standing upright, the back looks like it could be made of straight lines and the front of the body could feel like it's made of curves. But don't be fooled – our back is quite round. It's the scapulas, the spinal muscles and the obliques that can make it look flat. When someone is bent over, the back looks extremely curved, the ribs stretch apart from each other and the true curve of the back is revealed as the scapulas are drawn to the outside of it.





B Pulling forwards

Pulling the arms forward in front of the body flattens out the back muscles, making them less bulky, and allowing us to see through the muscles to the ribcage.

C Pulling back

When the arms are pulled back, the muscles between the scapulae compress together, forming pipe-like volumes, or cylindrical columns of skin. These columns flair out and become ramps above each scapula.

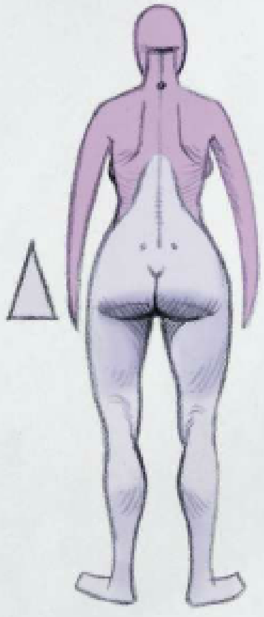
EXERCISES

1 Draw the pillow shape of the torso at every pitch, tilt and turn without limbs attached. Next, pull a few of the more interesting drawings from the bunch and attach legs and arms. Do the poses feel weighted correctly? Can they be pushed more? If so, animate the next one over the existing drawing and reattach exoskeleton.

2 Draw the figure abstraction using the two rhythms just explained, making sure the lines used to find the neck also find the scapulas. When both sets cross each other they should land where the ribcage ends. Think how similar these techniques are and how they might be combined. Now do more of each.

8. MALE AND FEMALE BACKS

Drawing the difference between genders comes down to the choice of design triangle (abstraction) you enhance. The upright triangle is enhanced when drawing the female form, from the gluteus muscles into the sacrospinalis group. For males, the downward pointing triangle is the most appropriate. It starts at the acromion processes and ends in the tailbone or sacral point.



PART THREE

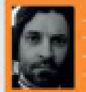
DRAWING THE WRIST IN MOTION

Drawing the wrist can be surprisingly hard to get right. Get under the skin of this tricky body part as **Ron Lemen** shows how to draw it in motion

Artist PROFILE

Ron Lemen

COUNTRY: US



Ron Lemen is a freelance artist and instructor who's worked in representational and fine art, illustration and entertainment art. He teaches drawing and painting classes, both traditional and digital, at Studio 2nd Street.

www.studio2ndstreet.com

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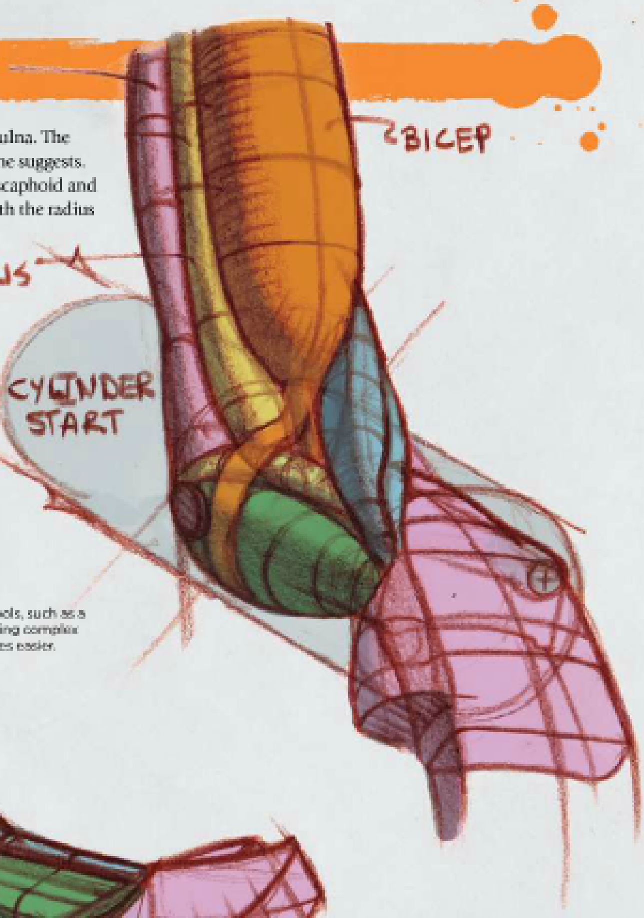
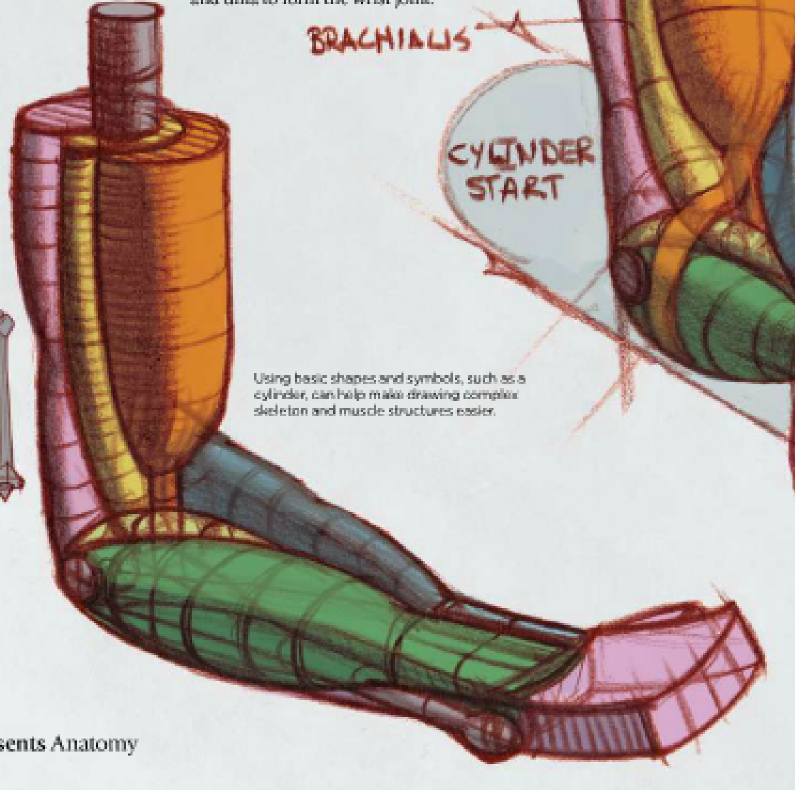
The wrist may be a small part of the body but it can cause some big problems for artists. It joins the lower arm and hand, and can move in all manner of ways and formations that effect how the arm and hand behave and look. To understand the wrist you need to first look at the lower arm – its rhythms and how it connects with the wrist. Here I'll explain the make-up of this part of the body, how it interconnects with other parts, and break it up into simple shapes, connections and movements.

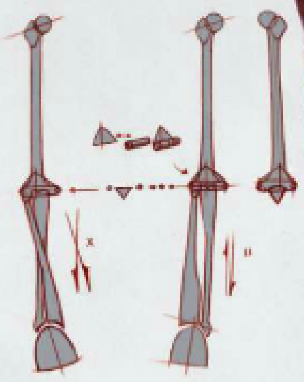
1. THE SKELETON

The forearm is made up of two bones, the radius and the ulna. The ulna is fixed while the radius rotates around it, as the name suggests. The wrist itself is made up of eight carpal bones plus the scaphoid and lunate bones, which articulate with the radius and ulna to form the wrist joint.





Using basic shapes and symbols, such as a cylinder, can help make drawing complex skeleton and muscle structures easier.



The bones of the body can be turned into simple shapes, such as triangles for joints.

2. SCALE AND MEASURING TRICKS

There are tricks that can help you when drawing the arm. For example, the hand is the length of the face plane from the hairline to the chin. The forearm (with the hand closed in a fist) is the same length as the upper arm, which in turn is the same length as the ribcage. When the arm is resting at the side of the body, the wrist will sit upon the greater trochanter of the femur.

Another handy trick to remember is the golden ratio: the lower arm is about two-thirds of the length of the upper arm, and the hand is about two-thirds of the length of the lower arm. The fingers are two-thirds of the length of the palm, and each phalanx (section) of the finger is two-thirds of the length of the previous phalanx. Remembering these simple ratios will save you a lot of grief when drawing figures.

“There are handy tricks, like the golden ratio, that help you when drawing the arm”

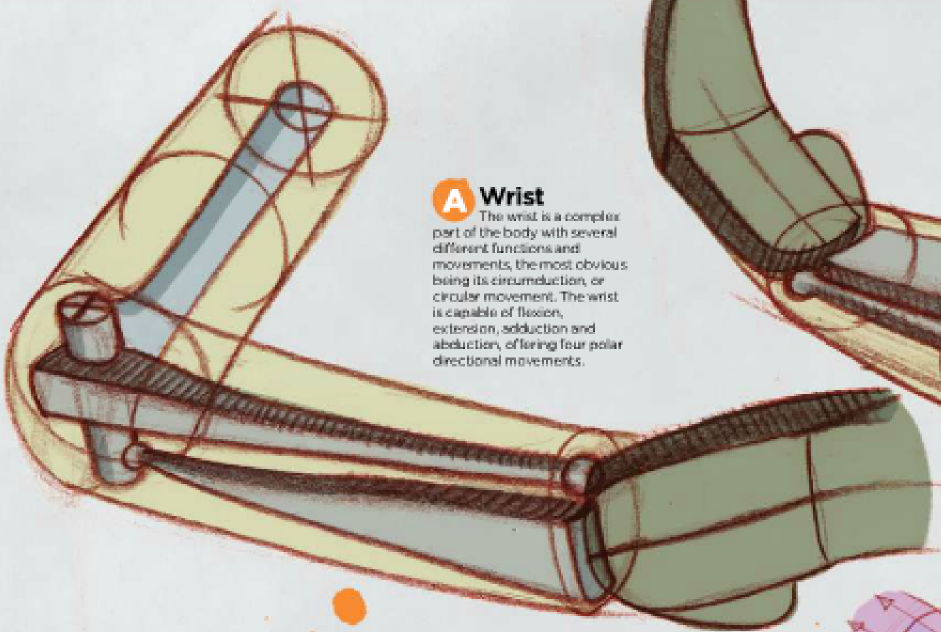
3. FIND ARM’S THE RHYTHMS

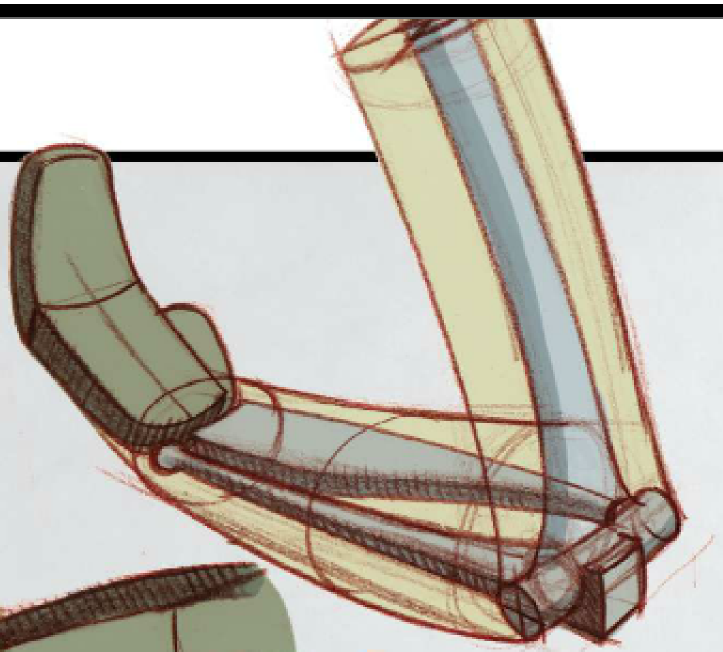
The rhythms of the forearm are connected to the muscles in the upper arm. To begin tracking the rhythms, the arm has to be designed. Start with the action line, which comes from the torso – this is the largest movement and needs to be found first because it links the movement to the torso, and will take away the ‘hard corners’ that can otherwise develop when building the figure piece by piece.

Once the action has been found and the character line is established, the width of the limb and then its rhythms are traced over these two edges. Typically, the rhythms traverse the limb, crossing from the outside to the inside.

Rhythms should not be isolated to tiny channels of information – a rhythm should tie everything together by swinging through it and adapting a part of each section to the ‘implied pathways’ that the artist establishes to help read the image and find its focus.

The rhythms of the forearm are connected to the muscles in the upper arm. To begin tracking the rhythms, start with the action line.





A Wrist

The wrist is a complex part of the body with several different functions and movements, the most obvious being its circumduction, or circular movement. The wrist is capable of flexion, extension, adduction and abduction, offering four polar directional movements.

B Hand

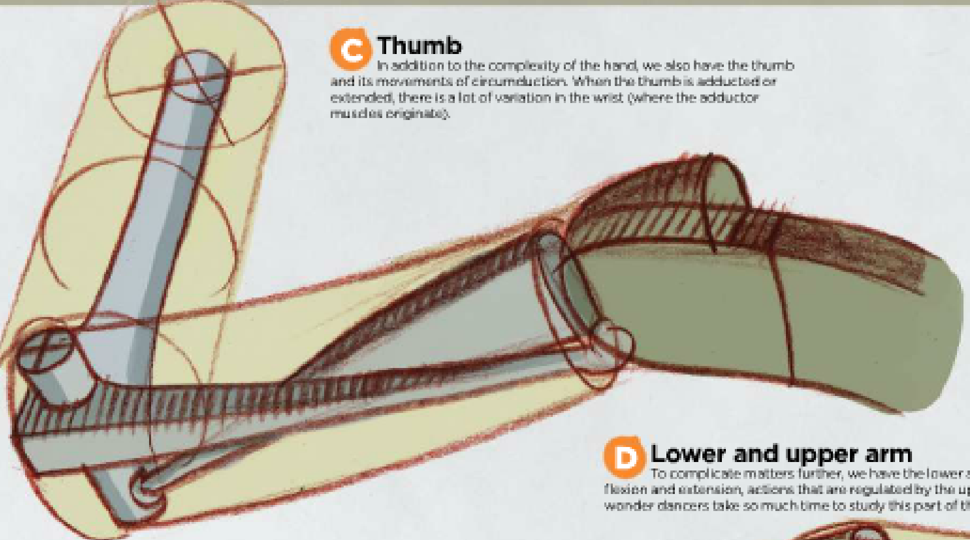
The hand can also rotate between those positions, creating what seems like endless variations and positions.

4. THE MOVEMENT SIMPLIFIED

So much expression and gesture can be created by the arms and hands that this area is considered by some to be as difficult to represent as the face, and the expressions even more tricky to capture. To make it easier, consider breaking this section of the body down into its composite parts (see on this page).

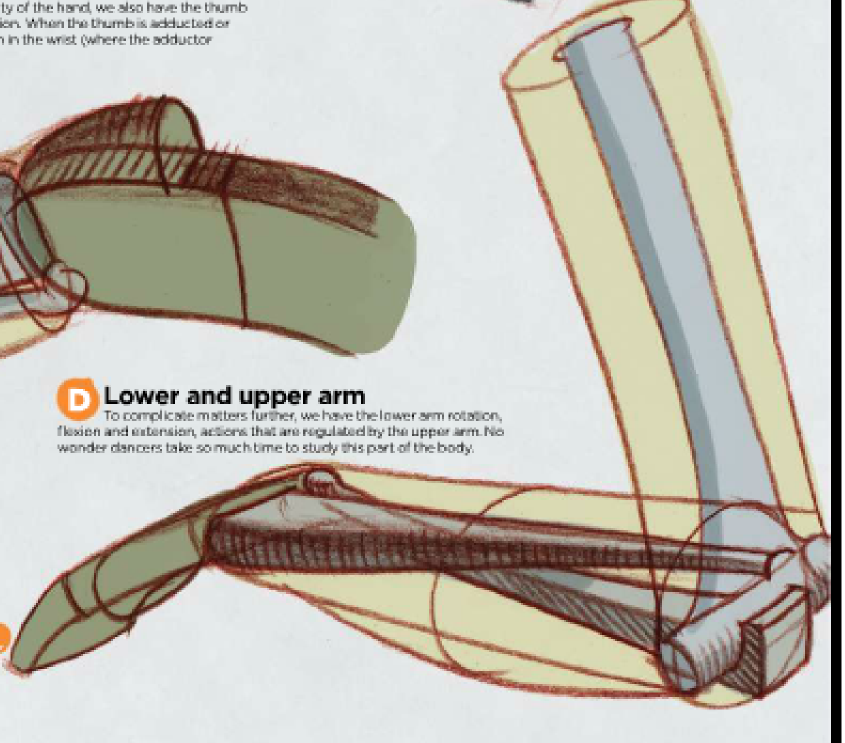
C Thumb

In addition to the complexity of the hand, we also have the thumb and its movements of circumduction. When the thumb is adducted or extended, there is a lot of variation in the wrist (where the adductor muscles originate).



D Lower and upper arm

To complicate matters further, we have the lower arm rotation, flexion and extension, actions that are regulated by the upper arm. No wonder dancers take so much time to study this part of the body.



> “This area is considered to be as difficult to represent as the face, and the expressions even more tricky to capture”

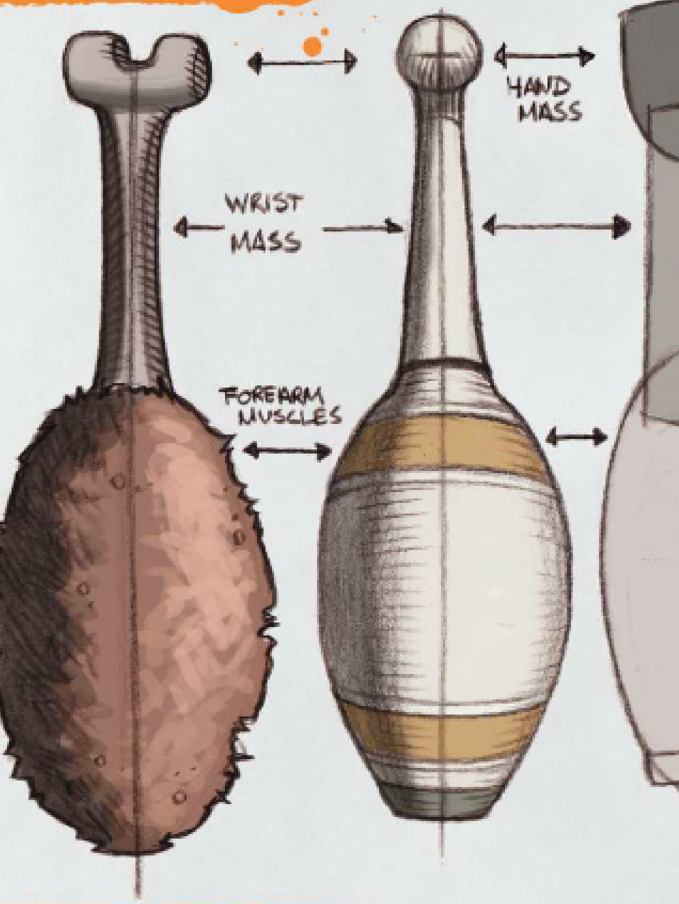
5. SYMBOLS WE CAN DRAW EASILY

When I design the bones of the wrist, I think of them as a pliable plank of wood that merges into a cylinder, or I use a bowling pin or drumstick-like shape to start with. This bowling pin-like shape groups together all the complex anatomy of the forearm but gives no indication of surface direction. We need to draw the four polar axis points on an ellipse to

> **"We need to draw the four polar axis points on an ellipse to assist in finding the surfaces"**

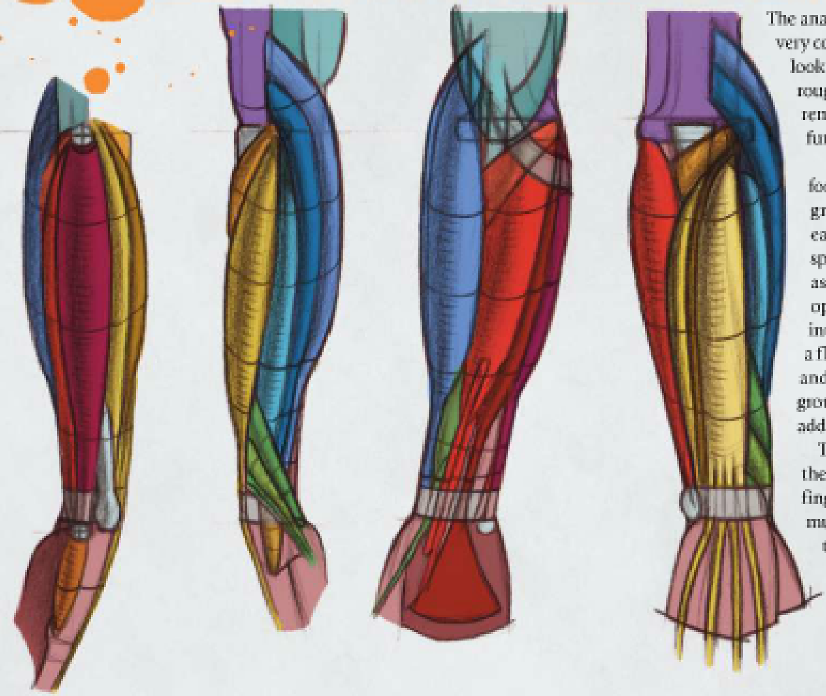
assist in finding the surfaces, using a perpendicular '+' shape to represent the ellipse's major and minor axes.

Where it joins to the hand the wrist is an ellipsoid joint, similar to a ball and socket joint such as the shoulder, and allowing the same type of movement to a lesser magnitude.



Using abstract shapes and symbols in simple stages can make complex drawing easy to manage.

6. MUSCLES OF THE FOREARM AND THEIR FUNCTIONS



The anatomy of the forearm is very complex, but here we shall look at a basic list and some rough illustrations to help you remember the placement and function of the muscles.

In its most simplified form, the forearm has four groups of muscles, with each group performing a specific function and assisting in stabilising the opposite motion. They fall into two main groups – a flexor/pronator group and an extensor/supinator group – plus the thumb adductor group.

The flexors flex the fingers, the extensors extend the fingers and the adductor muscles of the thumb extend the thumb or draw it away from the hand.

PRO TIPS

Understand your lines

When drawing limbs it is essential to start with two lines, the action and the character lines. These two lines will have a great impact on how you organise the spaces and connect the two sides together through rhythmical means. The action line denotes the activity of the arm or leg, and the character line describes the physical body type of your subject, and will help you flesh out the body. The lines are not necessarily parallel, though – limbs are tapered and are wider where they connect to the body.

7. PLANES AND SURFACES OF THE HAND AND WRIST

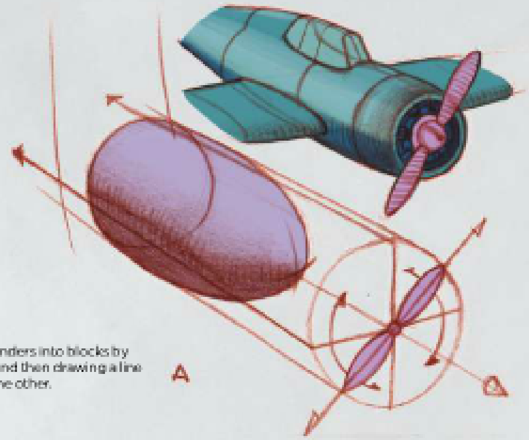
To plane out the arm, we have to transform our cylinders to blocks. Find the centre of the cylinder and, at the wrist end, draw a line from one edge of the cylinder to the other, through the centre.

Think of this line like an aeroplane propeller; spin the prop until it is in position, then box it in to the block shape, making it the centre line of the long axis. Label the thumb side to avoid confusion.

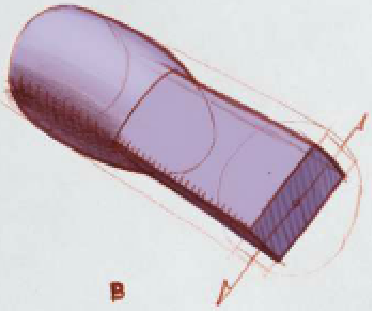
PRO TIPS

Line expression

Start simple and keep your image uncluttered – it is easier to solve the activity of a pose without extra lines everywhere. A loose gesture will give more life to a drawing than building it bit by bit. To keep gestures loose, find a place to attach them – think of the bones and tendons or the straighter lines in the arms and legs and torso as the gesture lines. Restrain your urges to start with the lumpy, bumpy bits – these elements can wait until you are ready to decorate the movement.



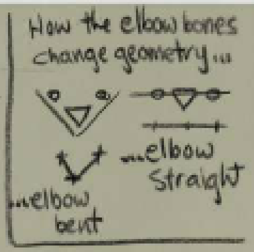
Transform your cylinders into blocks by finding the centre and then drawing a line from one edge to the other.

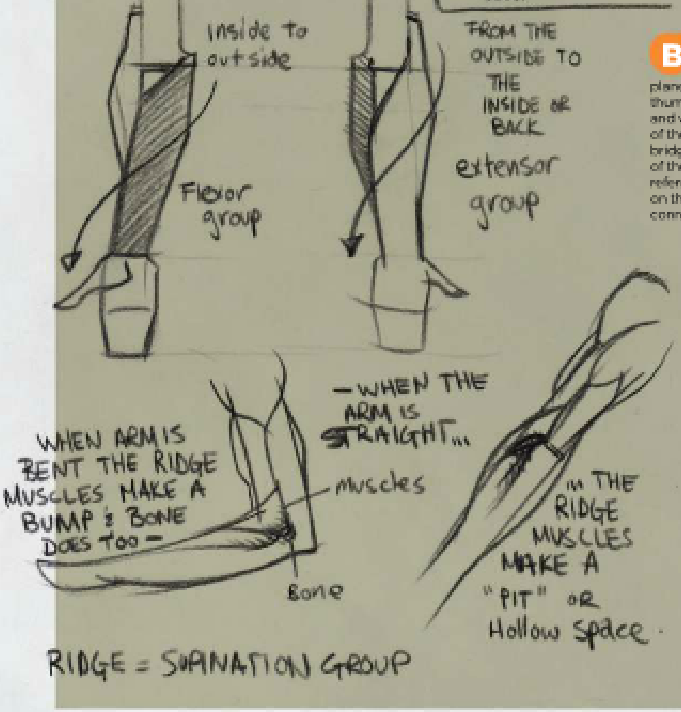


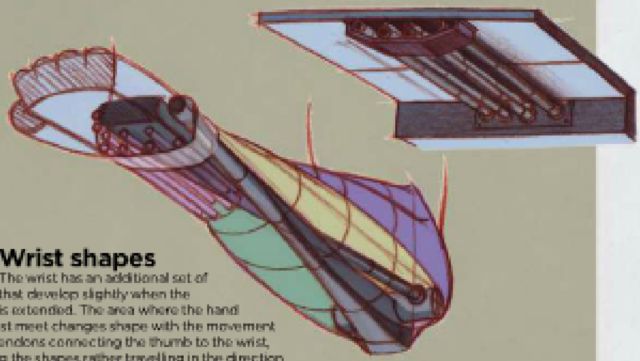
Once you have boxed your cylinders into block shapes, label the thumb side to avoid confusion.

A Forearm and elbow shapes

The ulna bone has the 'ulnar furrow' along the length of the forearm, which separates the flexors from the extensors. The back of the elbow is another landmark to take note of. When the arm is extended, the ulna, humerus and the bones of the elbow line up perfectly. When the elbow is bent, these three landmark points form a triangle and change the shape of the elbow to a triangular-like space that can be encapsulated in the cylinder.







B Wrist shapes

The wrist has an additional set of planes that develop slightly when the thumb is extended. The area where the hand and wrist meet changes shape with the movement of the tendons connecting the thumb to the wrist, bridging the shapes rather travelling in the direction of the bones. These additional planes form a space referred to as the 'snuff box' – a triangular deepening on the radial, dorsal side of the hand where it connects with the thumb.

C Hand shapes

When the hand is flexed or extended, the bent side forms a ramp with ripples of skin crossing it and the stretched side turns into an angle because of the tendons stretching around it. Understanding the basic shapes of the hand as it bends with the wrist will enable you to judge the surface correctly.

When the wrist is bent, a major fold emanates from the bones in the wrist, creating several ridges of skin that look like stairs.

8. THE SKIN AND SURFACE

The flexor muscles move the fingers through cord-like extensions called tendons, and the skin will crease across the tendons in a perpendicular direction.

When the wrist is bent in either direction the skin across it will crease in several places to alleviate the pressure of the stressing taking place. These creases have a major fold that emanates from either bone in the wrist, creating several ridges of skin (like stairs). When the thumb is extended, the two tendons above and below the thumb create the triangular 'snuff box'.

> “When the wrist is bent, the skin will crease to alleviate the pressure of the stressing”

The two tendons above and below the thumb create a triangular indentation called the 'snuff box'.

EXERCISES

1 In order to train your eyes to find gestures, you can start by tracing over photographs. Look for the tight indentations of the arms, legs, torso, and neck and draw a line through all of them to tie them together. Notice how the muscles get cut away in little triangular or teapot lid-like shapes. I think of these as an upper case 'B' that is applied to the cylinders after the action is found.

2 Now redraw what you traced freehand. Practise mimicking the lines you generated and learn to move your arm in a fluid fashion, from the shoulder to the wrist, holding the pencil on its side to stop your hand from acting as an anchor (as it does when you hold a pencil to write). Keep your movements large, loose and sweeping. Finally, memorising is key to becoming an artist, so every time you copy or trace something, draw it a number of times from memory to practice this skill.

PART FOUR

DRAW CURVY, STRONG HIPS

Learn how to create curvy hips on your female figures, add the pillar of strength to your heroic male characters, and everything in between with **Ron Lemen**

Artist PROFILE

Ron Lemen

COUNTRY: US

Ron Lemen is a freelance artist and instructor who's worked in representational and fine art, illustration and entertainment art. He teaches drawing and painting classes, both traditional and digital, at Studio 2nd Street.

www.studio2ndstreet.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

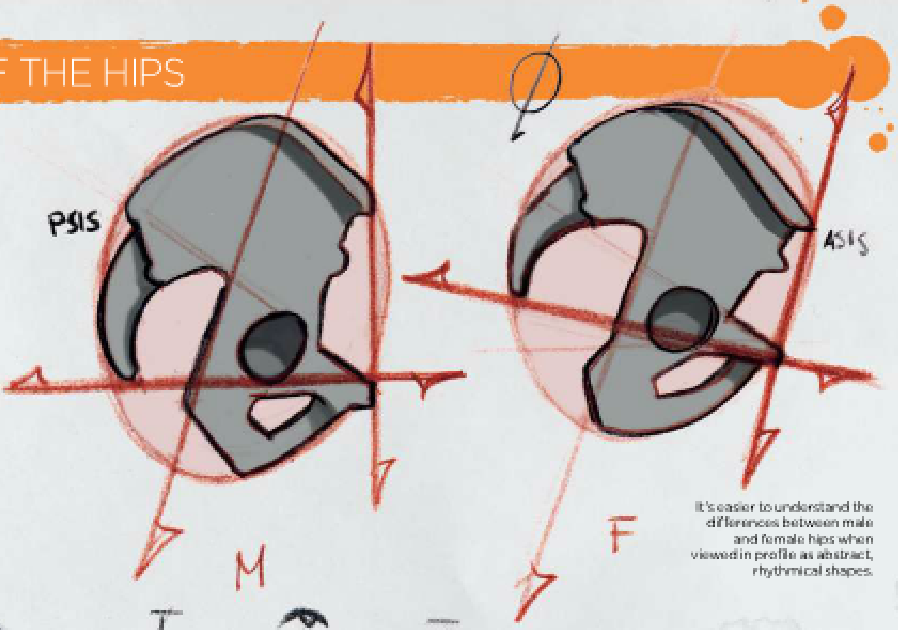
www.bit.ly/ifx-hips

Let's stop thinking about the hips as a place to sit and start thinking of them as the shoulders for the legs. This way we think of the mechanics differently and we will design this space based upon a function that is greater than just sitting or reclining. The round booty is really a small block of bone underneath those muscles and has no resemblance to what we physically see. This is why it can be so difficult to draw this space without making it look attached to the rest of the body. We are going to look at the mechanics of this space, and the artistic shapes we will need to memorise to make this part of the body rock solid and looking good without it being caricatured or cartoony. This is a surprisingly complex area to get right, but once you understand the structures, symbols and shapes needed it an be incredibly fun and add new character to your figures.

> "Stop thinking about hips as a place to sit and start thinking of them as the shoulders for the legs"

1. THE SKELETON OF THE HIPS

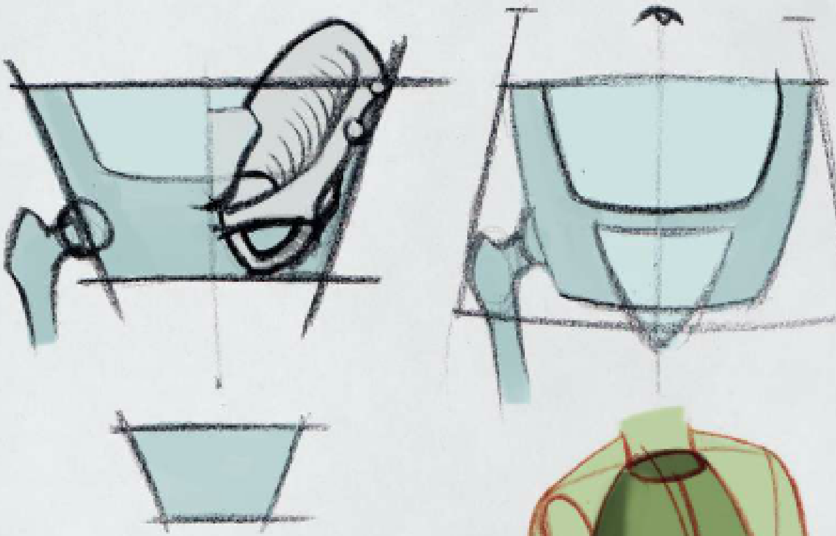
The hip bones are crazy contoured shapes that as artists we break down into rhythms where possible. This shape design, or rhythmical division of space, is a shortcut to the otherwise difficult to translate curves, pockets and transitions the hips create.



A Pelvis

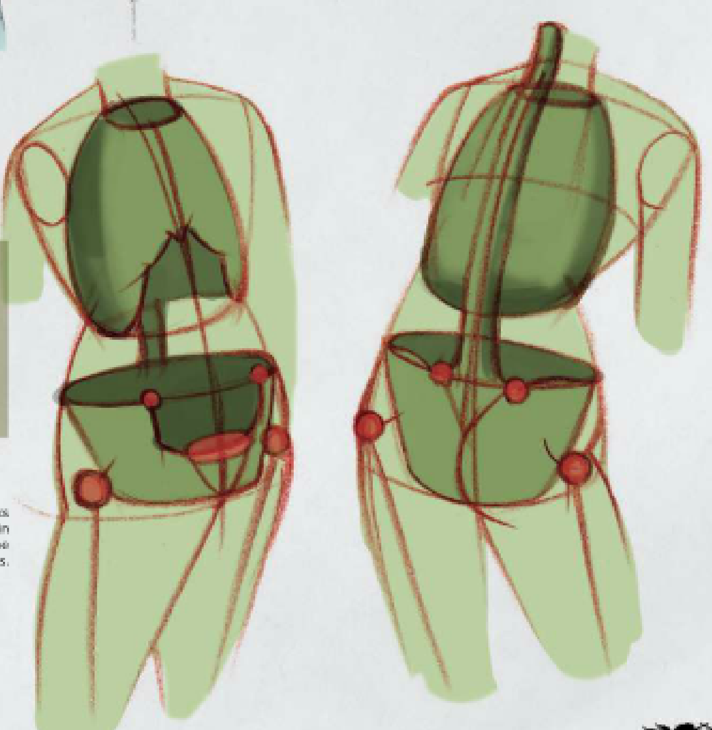
From the side, the pelvis can be set into an oval. The pubis is the forward protrusion that separates the genitals from the abdominal tract. On a male, the iliac crest and the pubis run vertical to each other, while on the female the two bones are at an angle to each other.

It's easier to understand the differences between male and female hips when viewed in profile as abstract, rhythmical shapes.



B Front and back

From the front and back, the bones take on a shape that might closer resemble a butterfly, if we really squint our eyes hard and imagine. Otherwise, the shapes that we use are an inverted trapezoid to simplify the structure. The trapezoid is also easier to track in its pitch and tilt if we remember the parallel relationship of the top and bottom.



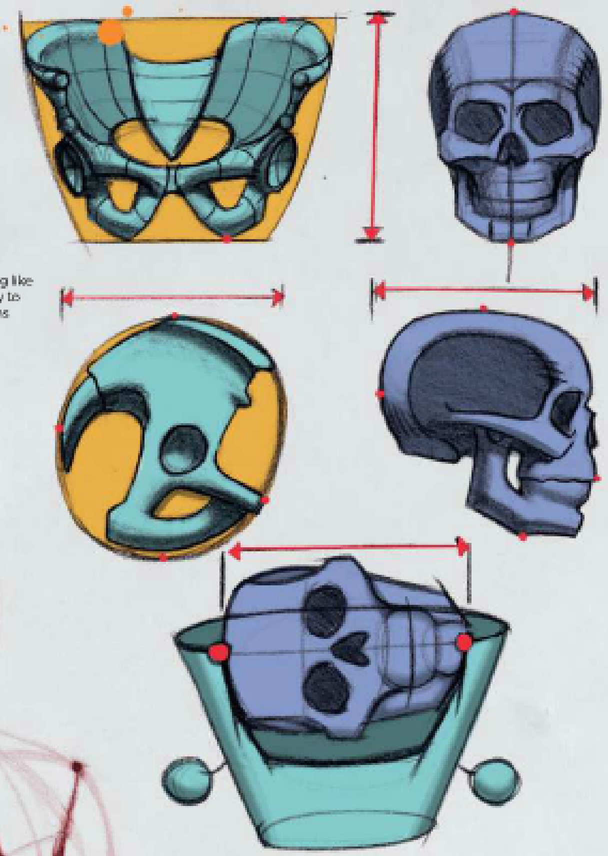
C Know your muscles

When plotting the muscles, we are looking for the bones that affect the skin, as these are the origin or insertion points for the muscles. The term to describe what we are looking for is subcutaneous. In the front of the body we are looking for the iliac crests and the pubis, both belonging to the pelvis. From the sides we are looking for the great trochanter, the head of the femur. From the back we are looking for the dimples of the Venus. Most of us have innies, while a few of us have flush dimples, making it next to impossible to track from the back.

"The bones take on a shape that might closely resemble a butterfly"

Plotting the landmarks where bones affect the skin can help us understand the muscles of the pelvis.

2. SCALING AND MEASURING THE HIPS



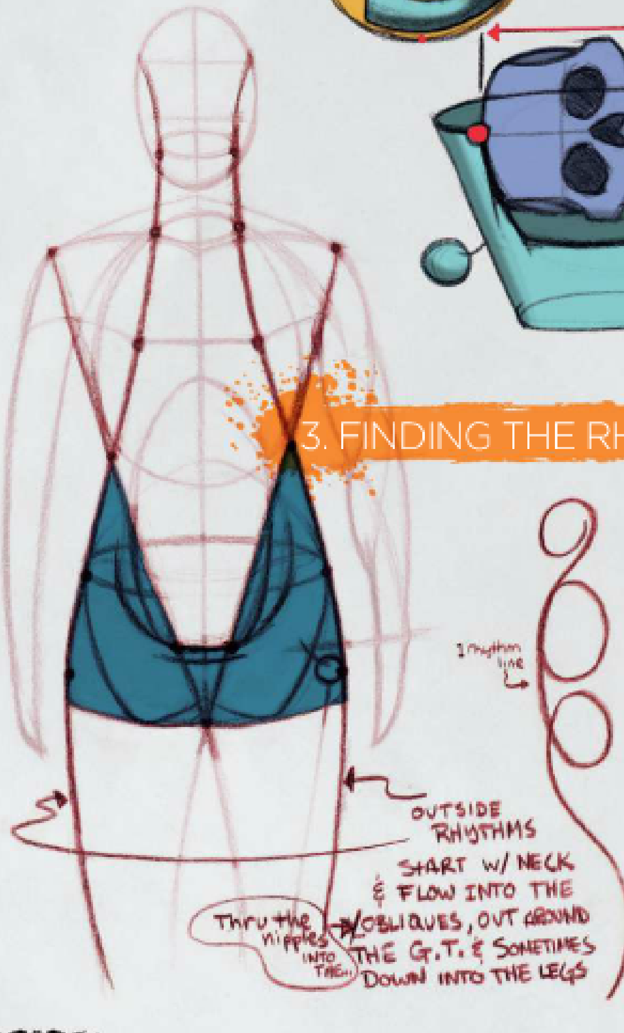
Comparative measuring like this can be an easy way to ensure your proportions stand up to scrutiny.

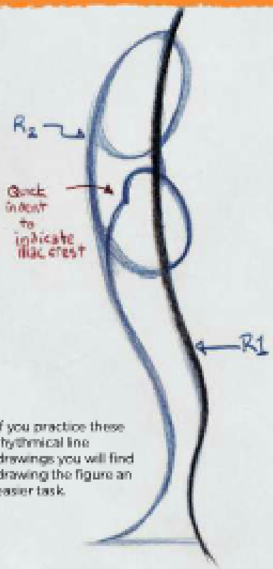
The pelvis is roughly the height of the skull. From profile, with the pelvis tipped forward, it is also close to the same width as the skull. If we turn the skull sideways it would fit snugly between the iliac crests of the pelvis. The skull and the pelvis are roughly the same height. From the side, the problem is that the gluteus muscles change shape and scale, so there is really no absolute for judging proportion to work from. This is where we use comparative measuring to find another part of the body that measures up to the width and/or the height of the pelvis.

Comparative measuring comes from intense sight training, or sight size. It is a tool that requires a keen sense of relationships, to relate one thing to another. It's a way of measuring one thing from another, a foolproof tool to gain an understanding of proportion. Look at **lemenaid.blogspot** for the video on careful measuring with a stick.

> **"A foolproof tool to gain an understanding of proportion"**

3. FINDING THE RHYTHMS OF THE HIPS





If you practice these rhythmical line drawings you will find drawing the figure an easier task.

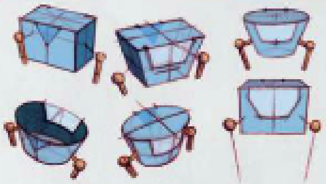
Finding the pelvis in the pillow shape, we can utilize the abstraction rhythms from the great trochanter to the neck silhouette, and from the acromion processes to the base of the crotch. The division between the two sets of lines defines the ribcage volume, the lower half of the pillow shape designed for the obliques and the pelvis.

From the side profile the hips are found with a circular rhythm that goes up and over the iliac crest and down below the torso and can loop into the leg rhythm of the quadriceps.

From the side of the body, the hips can be found by a continuous rhythmical line that starts at the skull, goes round the ribcage and continues circling the pelvis into the thigh muscle and back into the calf muscle. This is one of the trickier art rhythms but it helps find a figure in less than seven lines.

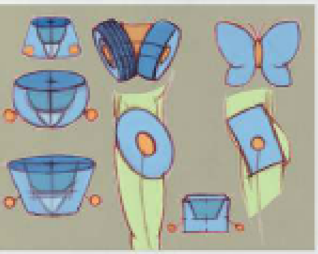
4. SYMBOLS HELP FIND THE FORM

There are a good number of symbolic shapes to help define the shape and structure of the pelvic region. Some of the more useful starting shapes, or the generalized shapes of the pelvis, an ovoid mass, a wide and narrow box form, or a sheared conical shape.



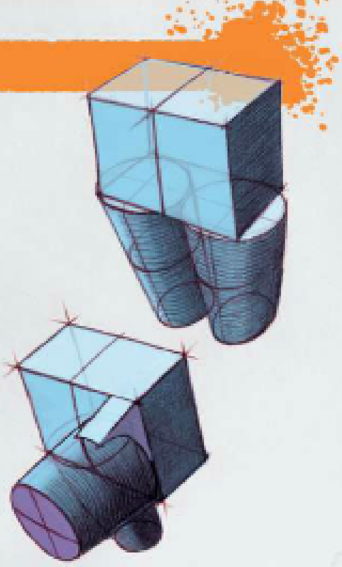
A The butterfly

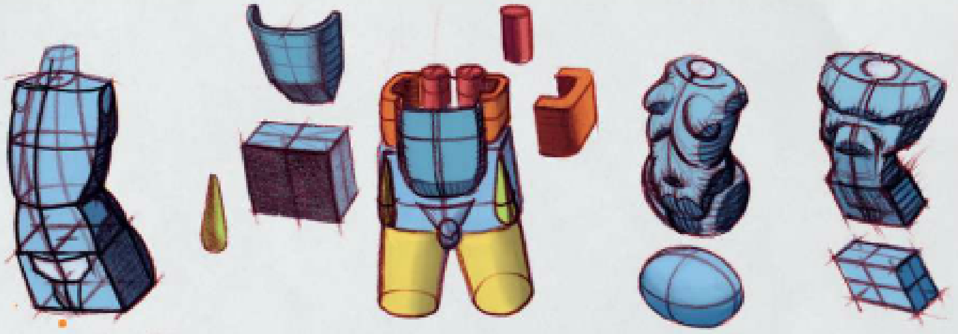
From the back, the pelvis can be designed like two tires pressing against each other on the inside edge, or the split in the gluteus muscles. The total sum of the gluteus muscles, medius and maximus can be designed, as touched on earlier, like a butterfly. This is mostly seen in the male pelvis but is not exclusive to the male. This design indicates the muscles as they are clinching and tightening up around the great trochanters.



B Cylinders

The legs are drawn as primitives, either cylinders or block forms. With the pelvis drawn as a block we can study the shapes and how they interact. The leg muscles actually originate on the pelvis and the legs start under the iliac crest. But because an artist needs a method of consistency, we break the body up into pelvis and legs separately for the construction drawing to help design a strong visual interactive pose with worthy architecture. When the figure is standing, the leg cylinders are drawn beneath the pillow shape or block shape of the pelvis. When the figure is seated, the leg cylinders are drawn within the shape of the pillow or pelvis block.



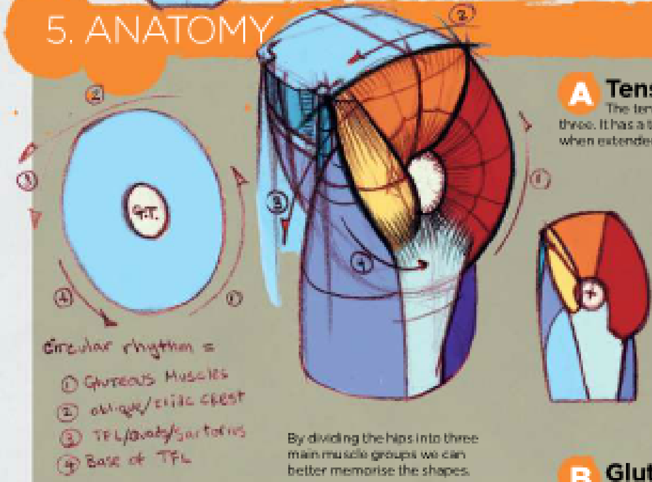


C Male and female blocks

The male is stereotypically drawn with a block like pelvis while the female as a spherical or ovoid like shape. Study these other torsos and how the shapes are assembled together to get a better idea of how shape construction is really as easy as building Lego.

Breaking the body into simple shapes and symbols helps identify proportion

5. ANATOMY



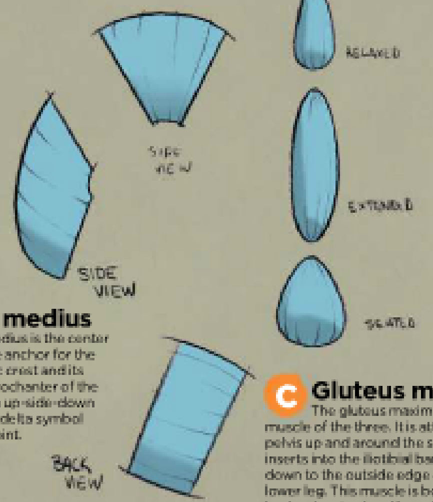
By dividing the hips into three main muscle groups we can better memorise the shapes.

The pelvis that we draw has only three muscles that we need to remember or memorise and they can be grouped up into simple shapes without the need to separate their heads from each other. All of these muscles grouped together are similar to the deltoid of the arm. Three Muscles circumducting the leg, moving it in an arc like the shoulder does for the arm.

A Tensor fascia latte

The tensor fascia latte or TFL is the front most muscle of the three. It has a teardrop shape when relaxed, a long cigar like shape when extended and a Hersheys Kiss like shape when it is flexed.

Each muscle can be seen as a distinct shape and makes learning them easier.



B Gluteus medius

The gluteus medius is the center muscle and acts as the anchor for the leg. Its origin is the iliac crest and its insertion is the great trochanter of the femur. This shape is an up-side-down triangle, much like the delta symbol without the bottom point.

C Gluteus maximus

The gluteus maximus is the largest muscle of the three. It is attached to the pelvis up and around the sacrum, and it inserts into the iliotibial band that extends down to the outside edge of the tibia in the lower leg. This muscle is box like from the back, a leaning box like a rhomboid shape.

PRO TIPS

Work process
Process is so critical when it comes to professional work. Process is going to save your butt when it comes to deadlines if you abide by process. Build a step process and make sure that each step has a beginning and an end so it can easily be defined and refined if error is eminent, and it usually is.

Step 1
Start with a loose gesture. This gesture begins the 'animation' of the pose.

Step 2
Construct and define the volumes involved. Hopefully the animation is still clearly defined in the pose.

Step 3
Loosen up the construction with rhythms that help harmonise the forms, connect the muscles together and set up spaces for the muscles to be rendered.

Step 4
The shadow stage, or notan stage (Notan is Japanese for Light/Dark done in flat tones). This is where the tone is defined, setting the stage for what kind of lighting is on our model.

Step 5
Here we define the volumes on the model, and the distance of the segments of the model to the viewer, and to the light source. This defines the dimensional context of our scene.

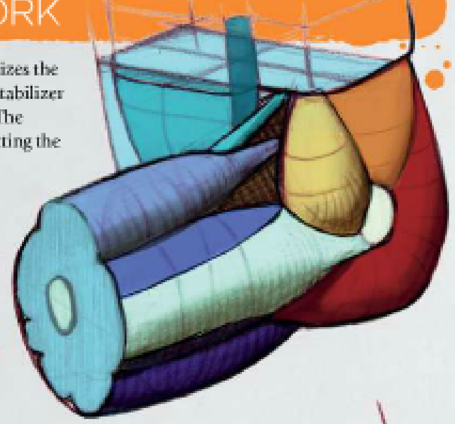
Step 6
This is where you add the accents and the highlights, and where you add any design and energy, lines that defy the previous stages for a higher purpose.

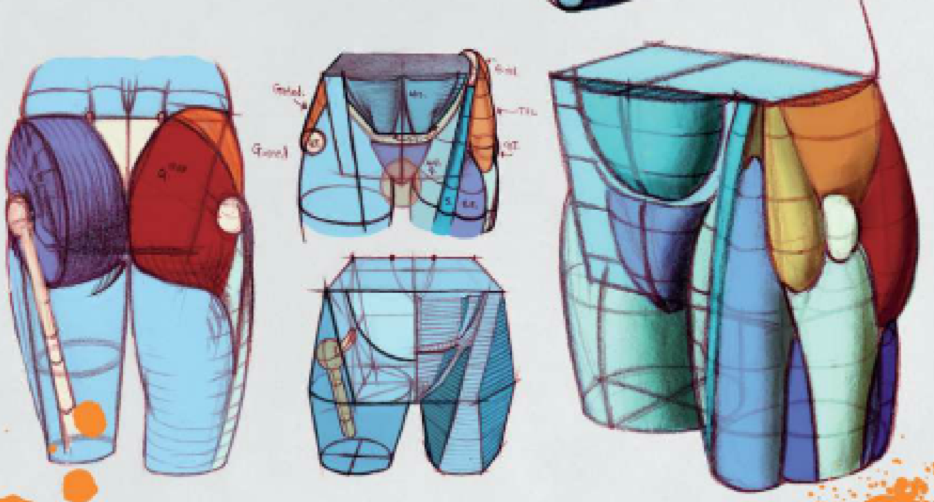
6. HOW THE MUSCLES WORK

The tensor fascia latte acts as the flexor for the thigh and stabilizes the outside edge of the knee. The gluteus medius is our walking stabilizer and assists in the rotation of the leg and adduction of the leg. The glueteus maximus is the power muscle, rotating the leg, adducting the leg, abducting the leg and tilting the pelvis.

> **"The legs start from under the iliac crest, the leg muscles are attached on the bone structure"**

muscles hang

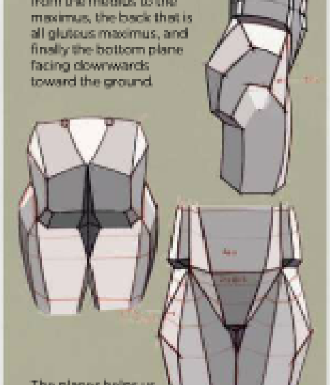




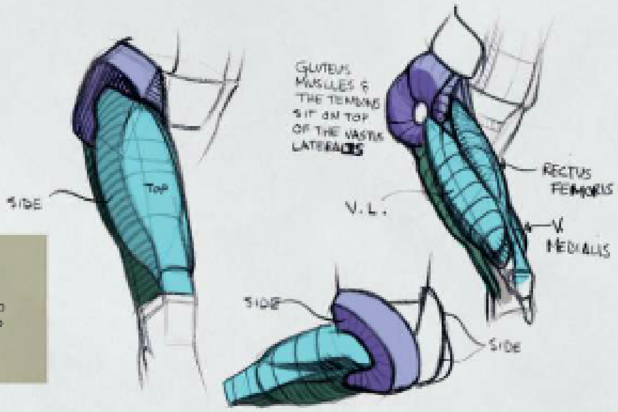
7. THE HIPS' PLANES AND SURFACES

From the front of the body the legs start from below the iliac crest but when we draw our systematic way, we place the legs under the pillow when they are extended and inside the pillow when seated. But the legs start from under the iliac crest as the leg muscles are attached, at this point, on the bone structure. The TFL makes a triangular division that is 45 degrees to the side and front of the body. The abs have three planes as do the Obliques. Only two of the planes are visible from the front view while from the side all three planes are visible.

A Side view
From the side view the gluteus muscles have five visible planes. The side, the top that runs across the gluteus medius, the turned edge that runs from the medius to the maximus, the back that is all gluteus maximus, and finally the bottom plane facing downwards toward the ground.



The planes helps us simplify the solid shape of the hips.



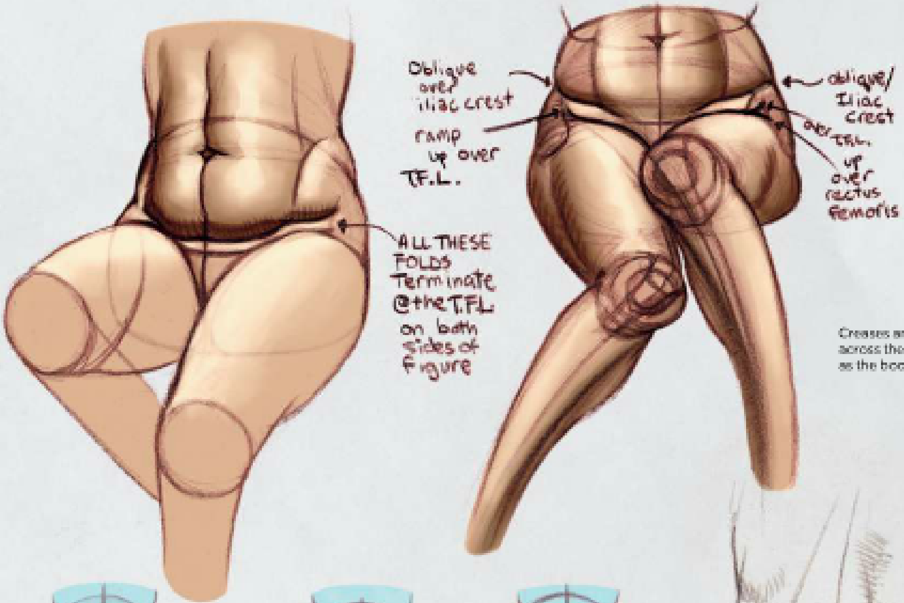
B Rear view
From the back we can see the same divisions as the side view and also the sacrum plane, which is totally flat to our view while both gluteus planes on either side are at an angle to our view.

8. THE HIPS SKIN AND SURFACE DEFINITION

Now we understand the skeleton, anatomy and muscle structure of the hips it's time to add skin. Understanding how skin acts, folds and creases across the muscles and bone of the hips, as the hips move, will give your figure drawing more credibility and help you with your imaginative art.

A Rear view

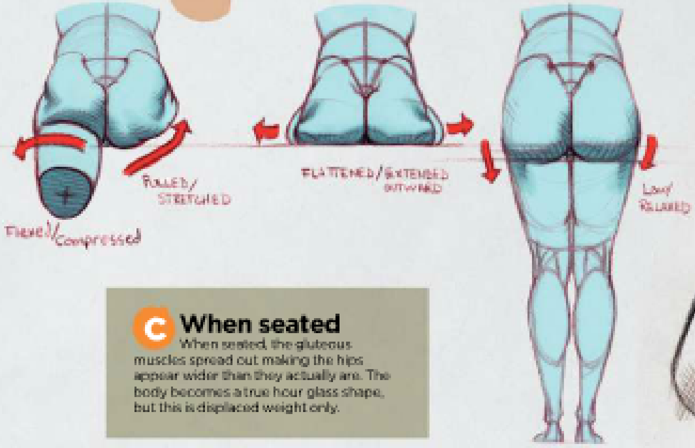
From the posterior view, the gluteus maximus runs into the hamstrings. This is an abrupt change in topography and so it has a crease across the entire width of the rear. This crease is an advantageous line for us as it is a cross contour, something that will describe a volume, free of charge because it is built into what we are drawing. When the leg is extended forward in front of the figure this line extends with it, stretching downward in the direction of the action. When the leg is pushed back behind the body as far as it will go, it creases across the width of the leg and shows off the roundness of the hamstrings.



B The front view

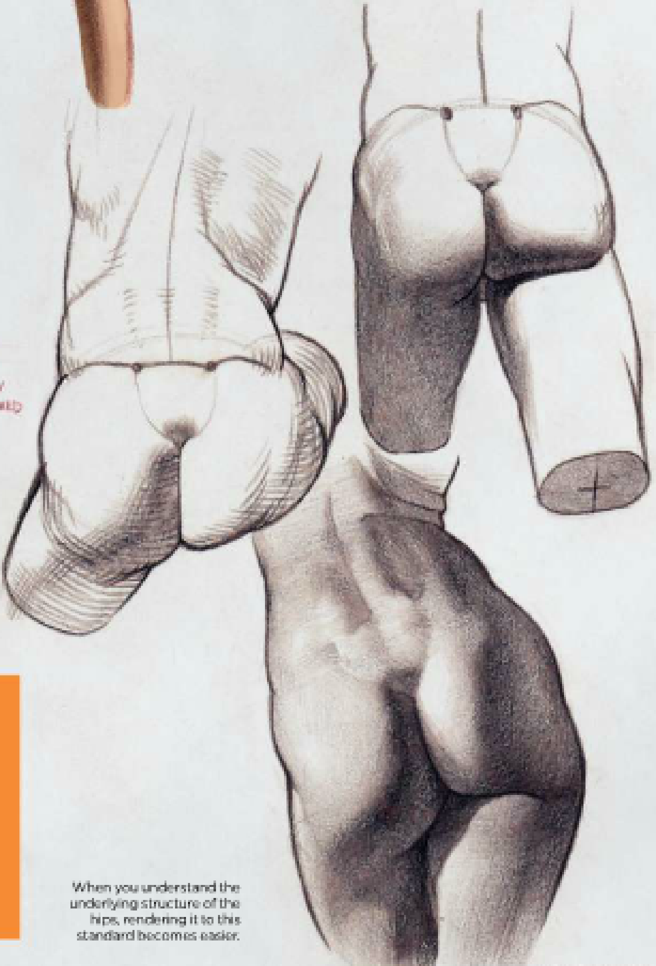
From the front of the body when we are seated we will get creases above the adductor muscles extending over until we reach the TFL where that line will terminate. Above that line we get the separation of the obliques from the iliac crest, and depending upon any excess weight, that line might extend all the way across the inguinal ligament. In standing position, there is a crease against the pubic mound, favored towards the weight bearing leg.

Creases and folds occur across the hips and pelvis as the body moves.



C When seated

When seated, the gluteous muscles spread out making the hips appear wider than they actually are. The body becomes a true hour glass shape, but this is displaced weight only.



When you understand the underlying structure of the hips, rendering it to this standard becomes easier.

EXERCISE

For every drawing you copy from an photo or a model, draw it again from memory. Put away the drawing after studying it for some time and, remembering the experience of drawing it, begin the same process used to draw the initial sketch. The more you draw from memory the more you are using memory rather than reference. Rubens, Michelangelo, Tiepolo, Titian, the giants of interior mural painting, were men of imagination. Given, they used models to set up the realism to study from, but when the picture was executed the imagination took over and the painted sketches were all that guided the painting as a reference. Imagine memorising all the drawings you have ever done and being able to recall them for inspiration. Draw with intent and purpose, remember the experiences and the methods you used to approach them, you'll be one step closer to the old masters.

PART FIVE

DRAWING THE BODY IN MOTION

Make your figures move with realism by understanding how the body works, **Ron Lemen** explains the ins and outs of movement...

Every artist has their own version of 3D rendering software in their head but, without the correct training, that program will lie dormant.

Work on your 3D 'muscle' by doing repeated exercises in your mental gym – these muscles will build up and the camera, the artist's inner vision, will come to life. Life drawing demands a rich visual library, which should be memorised by drawing the same exercises and muscle forms and rhythms over and over again.

These kinds of mental exercise will assist in turning your mental 'camera' on and helping you interpret how the human machine works and appears. Read my words in this workshop carefully, over and over – they describe specific motions and will help the information to 'stick' the more you revise it.

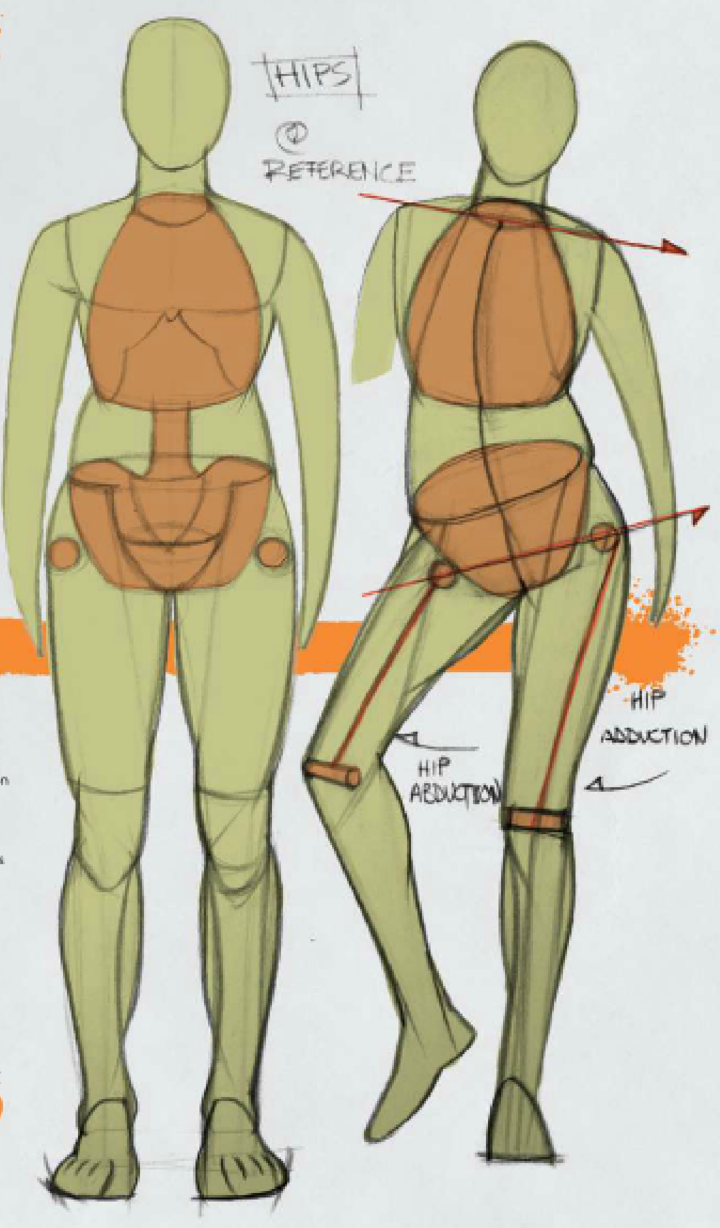
Artist PROFILE

Ron Lemen

COUNTRY: US

Ron Lemen is a freelance artist and instructor who's worked in representational and fine art, illustration and entertainment art. He teaches drawing and painting classes, both traditional and digital, at Studio 2nd Street.

www.studio2ndstreet.com



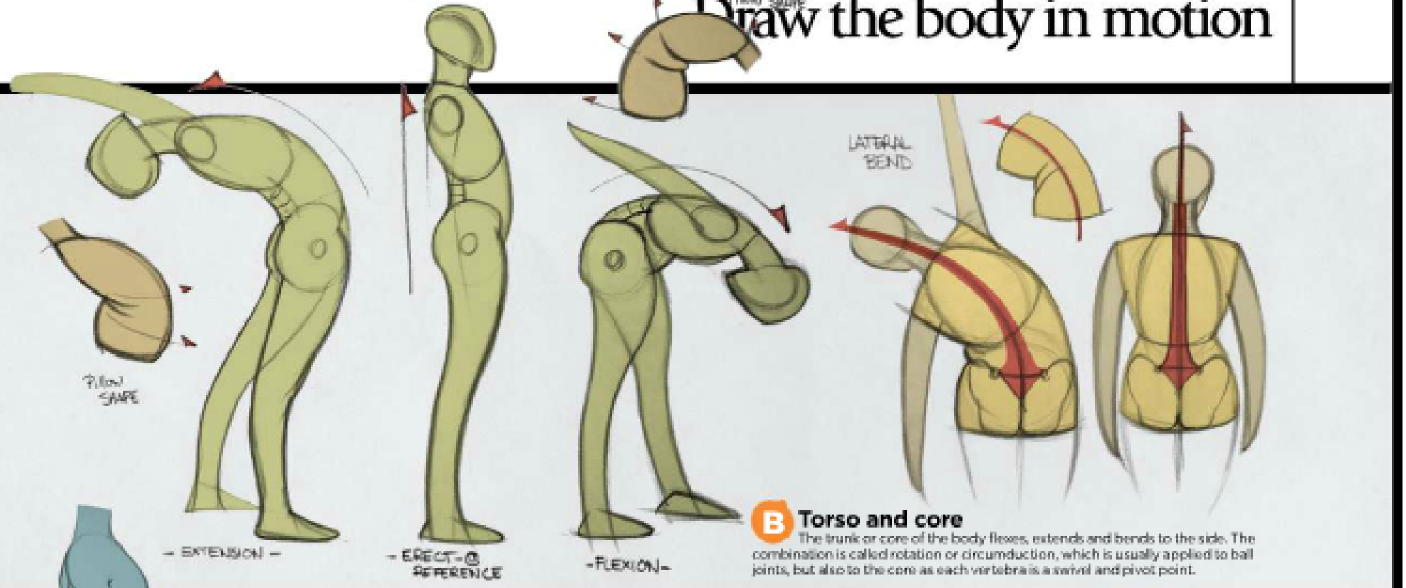
1. BODY MOVEMENTS

To start with, let's look at how different sections of the body move and bend. Dividing the body into parts like this offers a detailed understanding of how we move; then we can put it all together...

A Shoulders, ankles and fingers...

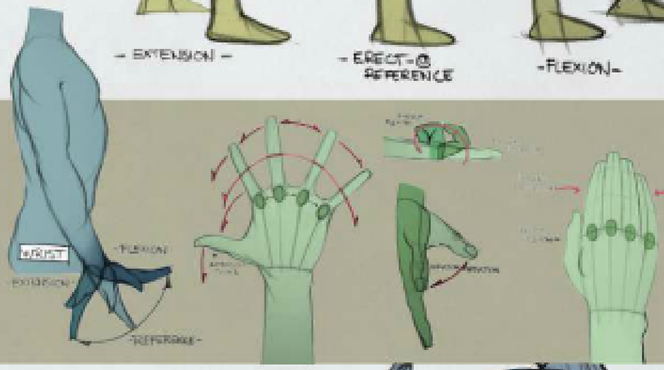
Circumduction is a circular motion combining flexion, extension, adduction and abduction, and is attributed to parts of the body that are round in design like the ball joints. The shoulders and hips are the largest areas, and other areas include the wrists and ankles, fingers and toes, and the head. We use circumduction when winding up for something like a softball pitch or swinging a tennis racket.

> "Circumduction is a circular motion attributed to parts of the body that are round in design"



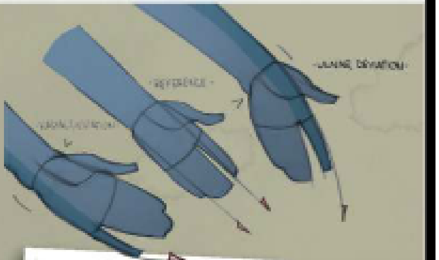
B Torso and core

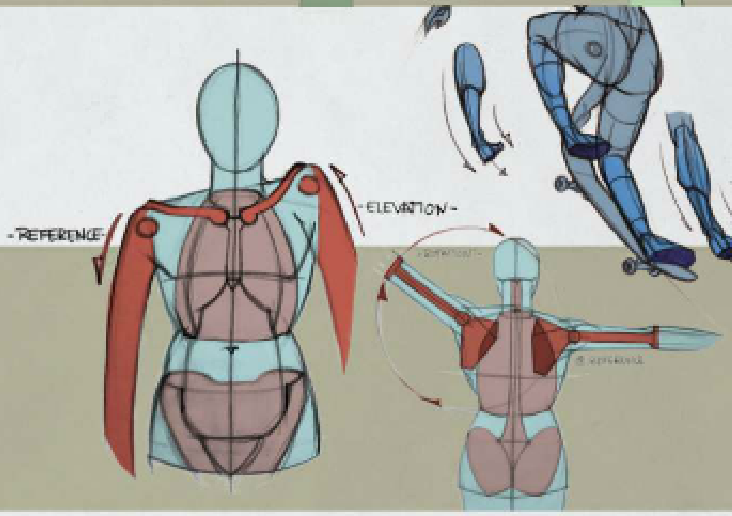
The trunk or core of the body flexes, extends and bends to the side. The combination is called rotation or circumduction, which is usually applied to ball joints, but also to the core as each vertebra is a swivel and pivot point.



C Arms, hands and feet...

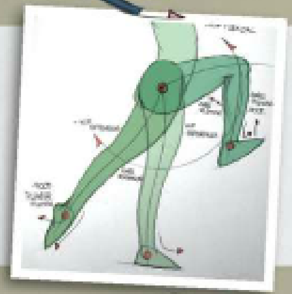
The arms, hands, fingers, legs, feet and toes all have a number of movements available to them: abduction (flexing), adduction (drawing together), flexion (moving towards you), extension (moving away from you) and reference, the natural resting point for the limbs.





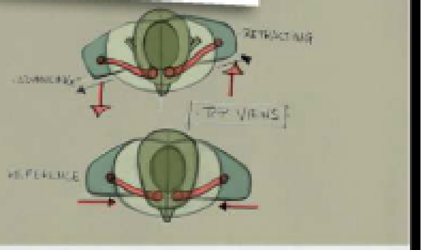
D The foot

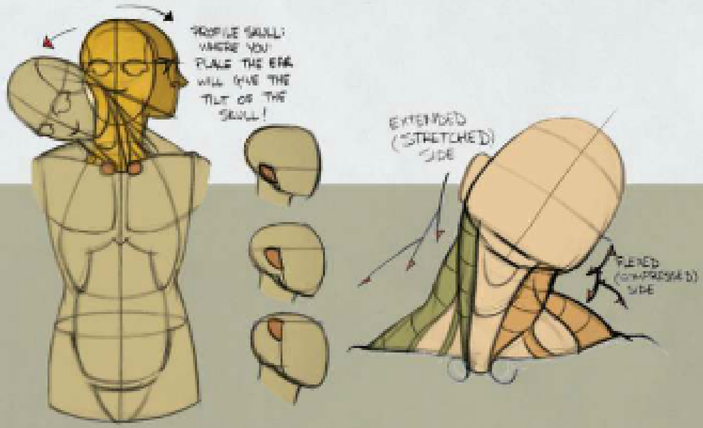
The foot inverts and everts. If you skateboard, then you will invert the foot to do an 'ollie' while the everting foot brings the rider back to a normal stance. The foot performs dorsiflexion to lift the toes towards the shin, and plantar flexion to point the toes to the floor.



E The shoulders

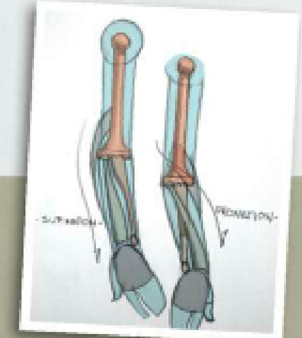
The shoulders advance, retract, elevate, adduct and abduct. When the arm is extended to pick up a glass of water, that is advancing. The arm is pulled back to yawn and stretch, and is pulled back and up over the head in a stretch. These actions are retracting. The arms advance and retract according to their forward or backward motion.





F Forearms

The forearm's specialised movements are pronation and supination, and rotation of the wrist. The forearm and wrist are flexible parts of the body that can be difficult to capture accurately.



G The neck

Another incredibly flexible part of the body, the neck laterally bends, rotates, flexes, extends and circumducts. Learning to control the movement of your figure's neck can help convey all manner of emotions.

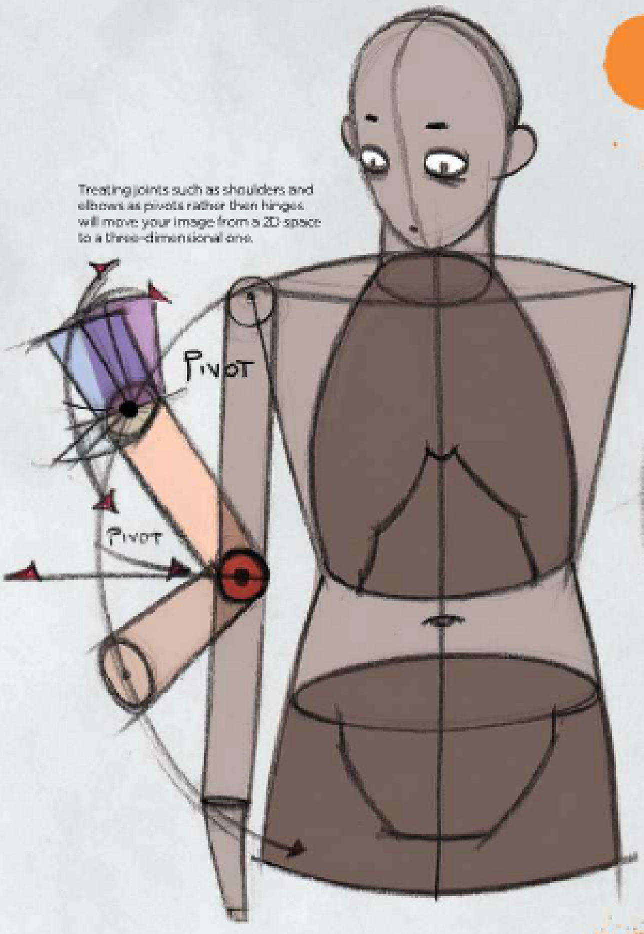
2. UNDERSTANDING ACTION

As with anything that we create from imagination, it is important to first practise it from life. Looking at reality in the first instance helps make a connection with the imagined images we have in our minds. We are attempting to mimic the human machine and its activities driven by emotions, so it is good practice to start with reality as your guide.

There are some useful concepts I keep in mind when inventing figures in action. First, the entire body reacts to the action; there is no part of the body that does not contribute in some way. Since all the different parts of the body are attached to the movement, there should be some rhythm or parallel relationship to the direction of the primary action. The rhythm lines and points of radiation tie the entire body together through abstraction and implied line design, thus making a much stronger overall pose.

The muscles of the body are woven together rather like a rope, so they will react together to an action, and will also have a spiralling or winding relationship to each other.

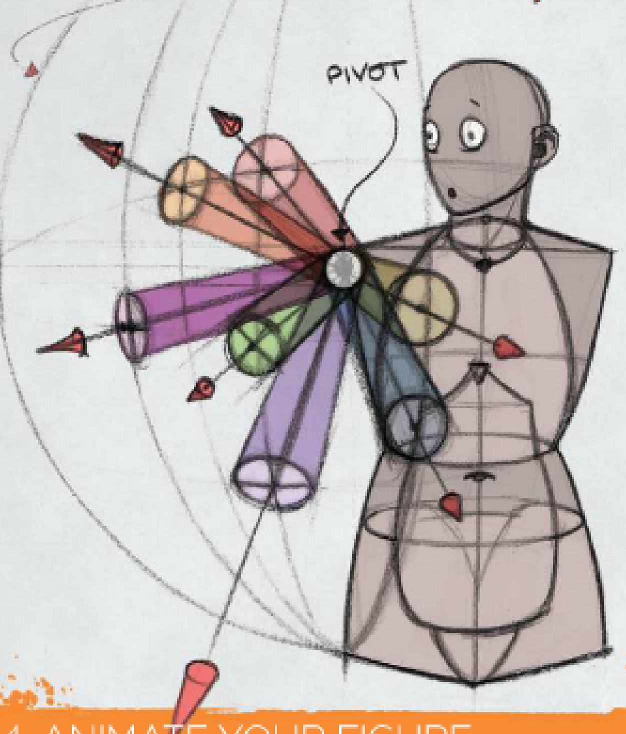
“The muscles of the body are woven together rather like a rope, so they will react together to an action”



Treating joints such as shoulders and elbows as pivots rather than hinges will move your image from a 2D space to a three-dimensional one.

3. ANIMATION TECHNIQUES

Animation techniques are favoured in an attempt to free the mind of the need for reference. Starting with simple shapes helps disconnect the artist from the need to commit to details. Animation practise should be simple and loose and if you call it animation, it will no longer be sketching but something more dynamic in the mind. Change the word and it can change our perception of the task.



“Circumduction is circular, so the shoulders, wrists, hips, the neck and the spine can all act as pivot points”

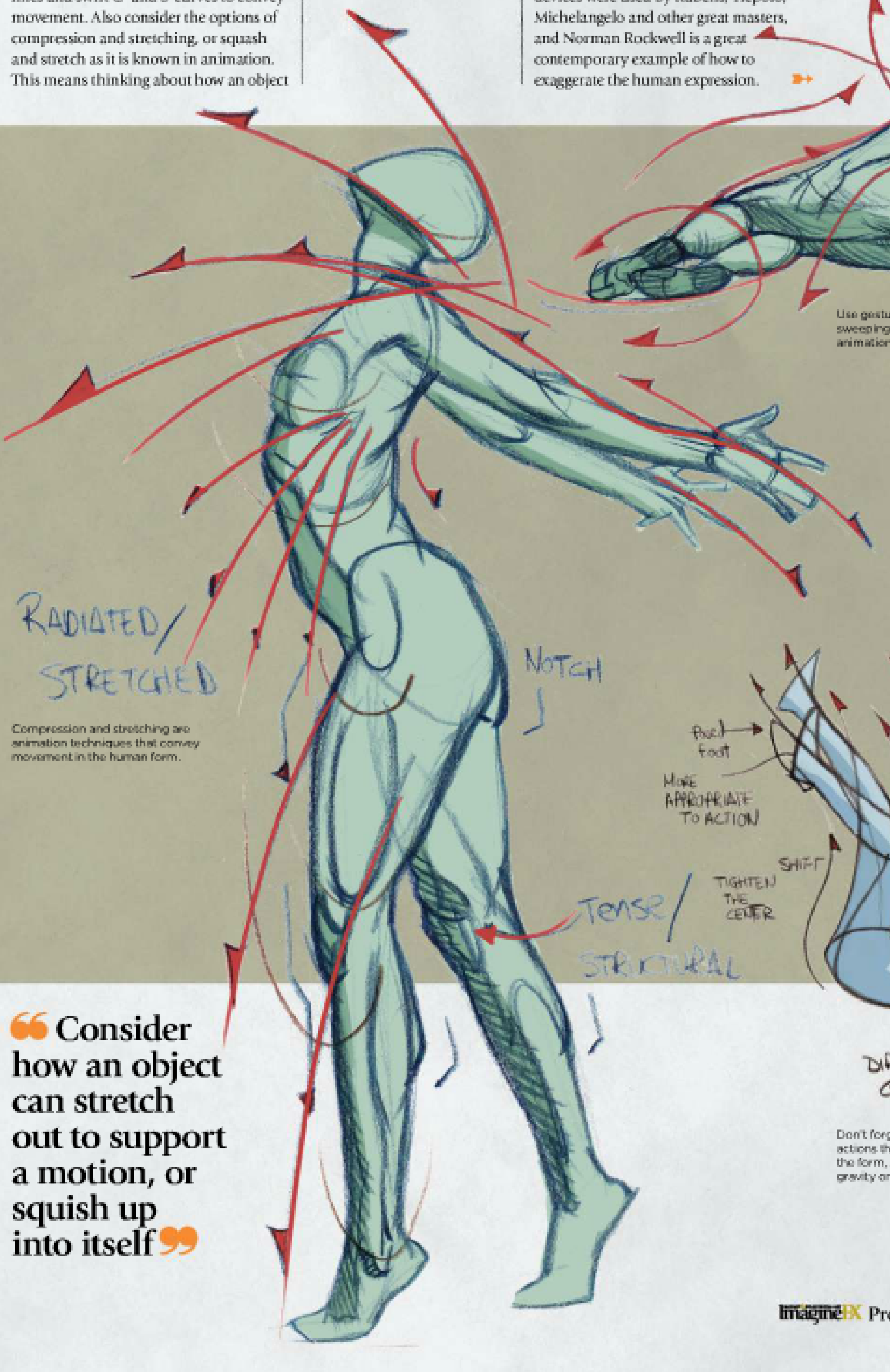
4. ANIMATE YOUR FIGURE

Since circumduction is circular, we can use the shoulders, wrists, hips, the neck and the spine as pivot points for our animations. Treating them like a hinge inhibits most of the circumduction, and treating them like a swivel allows us a three-dimensional space to move around in. All of these concepts are controlled by drawing arcs from the outermost point of the limb that we are animating around the pivot point. Draw a perfect ellipse, which controls the action very specifically. A perspective exercise will help with this: move a shape in space and observe how the planes relate to each other by volume, distance and overlap.

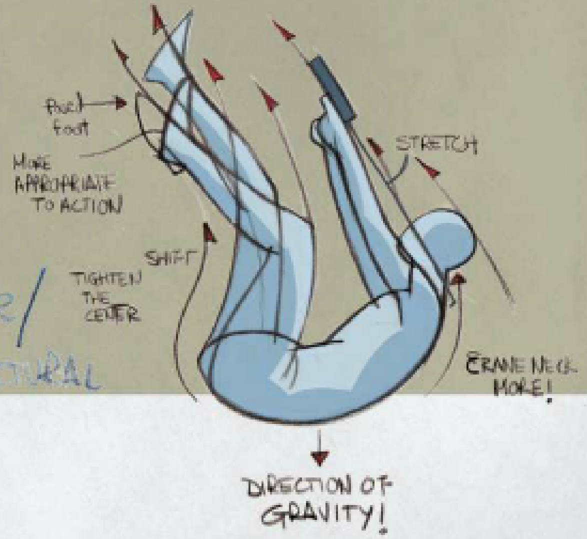
5. GESTURE DRAWING

After trying to animate something mechanically, discard the ellipses and pivots and try to animate using gestural lines and swift C- and S-curves to convey movement. Also consider the options of compression and stretching, or squash and stretch as it is known in animation. This means thinking about how an object can stretch out to support a convincing motion, or squish up into itself to show anticipation or cowardice. All of these devices were used by Rubens, Tiepolo, Michelangelo and other great masters, and Norman Rockwell is a great contemporary example of how to exaggerate the human expression.

Use gestural lines and fast, sweeping curves to convey animation and movement.



Compression and stretching are animation techniques that convey movement in the human form.



Don't forget to consider outside actions that could also affect the form, such as the effect of gravity on a falling body.

> “Consider how an object can stretch out to support a motion, or squish up into itself”

> " A combination of sweeping lines and sturdy straights or rigid corners helps to create a more realistic image "

Organic forms naturally have a combination of sweeping and straight lines, and a mix of hard edges and soft, rounded shapes.

PRO TIPS

Multiple poses

Do not be afraid to draw more than one pose to work out the problem of which pose is the most effective for your art. Iterations are important. It's too easy to add more detail than we need to. Think about changing the word 'sketch' into 'animate' to grasp the idea of movement. You might not want to be an animator, but doesn't the idea of 'animating' a pose sound better than drawing it 20 times until you get it right?

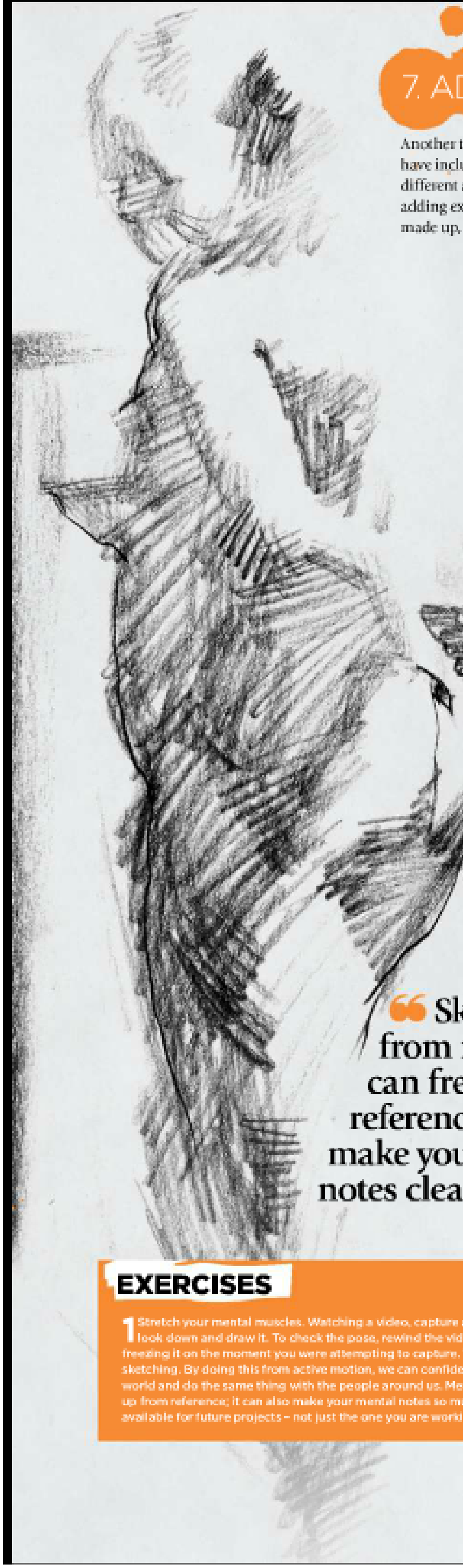
6. KNOW YOUR LINES

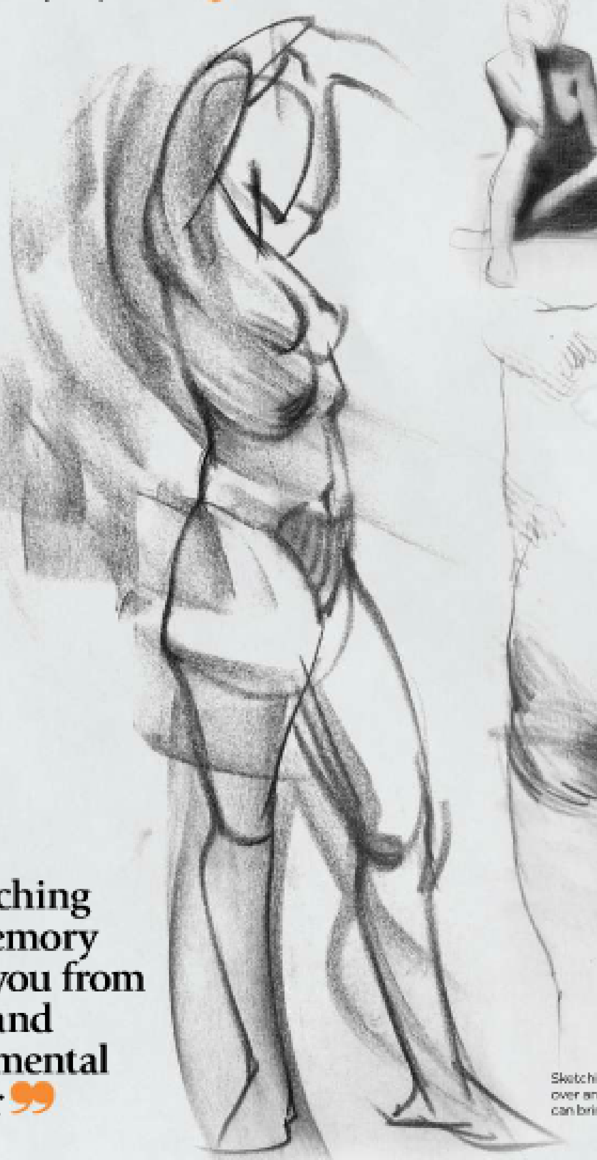
A combination of sweeping lines and sturdy straights or rigid corners helps to create a more realised, realistic image. In Photoshop, import a Rubens or Michelangelo image and paint over the straights. The image gets very rubbery, very animated, not so realistic looking.

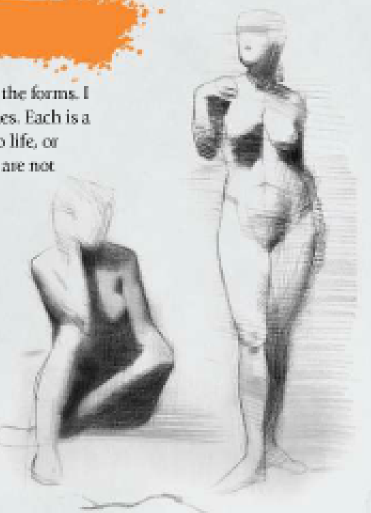
These artists understood how to bring something to life using colour, with believable forms, convincing textures, optically correct perspective, and with animation and movement. In fact, these artists can be considered the first animators. If you are wondering how to bring a realistic picture to life and make it animated without lessening the quality of the work, the artists I have mentioned here are worth investigating.

7. ADD MOTION WITH LINES

Another type of rhythm and movement is line movement over and around the forms. I have included many examples here done in charcoal, all five-minute sketches. Each is a different attempt at getting a pose that can often feel static and bringing it to life, or adding excitement, to something that we do not see as active. These images are not made up, they are inspired by live models.







> “Sketching from memory can free you from reference and make your mental notes clearer”

Sketching line movement over and around the body can bring static poses to life.

EXERCISES

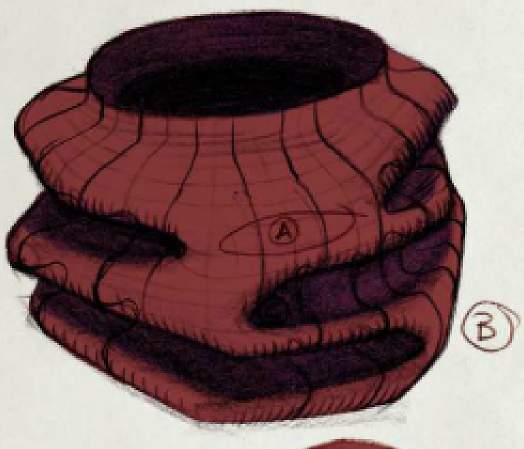
1 Stretch your mental muscles. Watching a video, capture a pose in your mind then look down and draw it. To check the pose, rewind the video and watch again, freezing it on the moment you were attempting to capture. This is a form of memory sketching. By doing this from active motion, we can confidently go out into the real world and do the same thing with the people around us. Mental sketching can free you up from reference; it can also make your mental notes so much clearer, and make them available for future projects – not just the one you are working on now.

2 If you have access to a life drawing class, try these exercises. Set up your easel so you are standing with your back to the model; or you can set up your pad in another room entirely. Take in as much information as you can, then go and draw without looking back. This is another way of exercising memory. The time between viewing and drawing when facing the model is very short, and we do not notice that we are working from memory. When you stretch out that time, you are flexing your mental muscles which will sharpen your photographic memory. This is an extremely valuable exercise.

PART SIX

MASTERING DRAPERY IN FIGURE DRAWING

Breaking down clothes into composite shapes, understanding tension and the core shapes of folds, **Ron Lemen** dresses up figure drawing



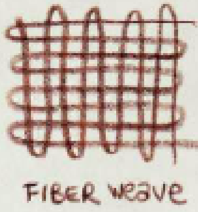
Artist PROFILE

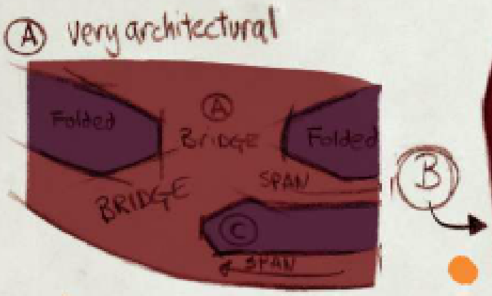
Ron Lemen
COUNTRY: US

Ron Lemen is a freelance artist and instructor who's worked in representational and fine art, illustration and entertainment art. He teaches drawing and painting classes, both traditional and digital, at Studio 2nd Street.
www.studio2ndstreet.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifz-drapery

This is an amalgamation of many different topics regarding folds, how they are formed, their design and a way of examining and process for studying them. All the drawings you see are studies from images found all over the internet. Study leads to consistency in your figure drawing, which in turn leads to memorisation and then reflex.





1. WHAT MAKES A FOLD

Let's begin by understanding material. Material is made up of fibres traveling in two directions, laterally called the weft, and longitudinally called the warp. These two directions, very mechanical by design, help influence the architecture of the fold. The bridge or the link that connects one fold to another is influenced by the warp threads.

Folds are a pipe shape by nature although the ones that spread out wide, and the ones formed by a tight thread count will not appear like a pipe fold, but by nature they are rolling pipe forms much like a wave in the ocean that has not yet curled.

When folds switch back, or half lock on themselves, the ends where the material traverses back is called the eye of the fold, and has its own little billow shape to it. This is caused by the warp and weft creasing in three spots causing the end to open up like a letter T.

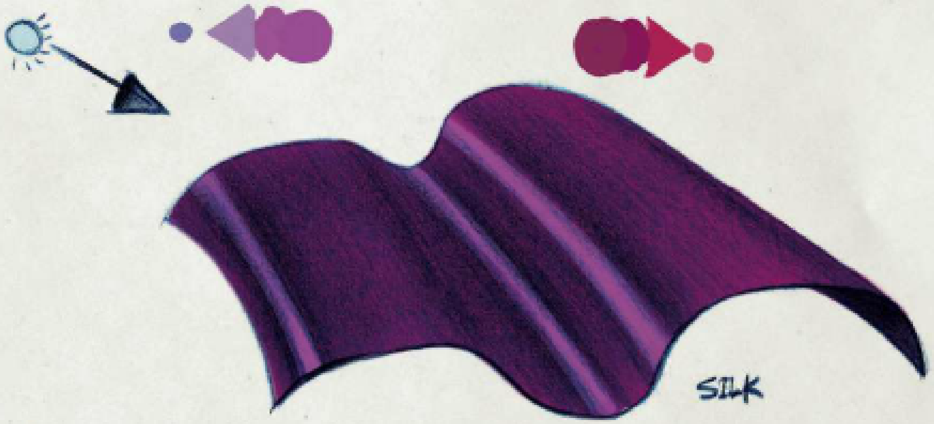
The spaces between the pipes are polygon or triangular-like and can be mechanical and rigid, or organic and curvilinear. The flats and the pipes are connected together by a transition or a ramp that varies based upon whether it is top side or on the bottom, what type of material, and how loose or tight the fit of the clothing.

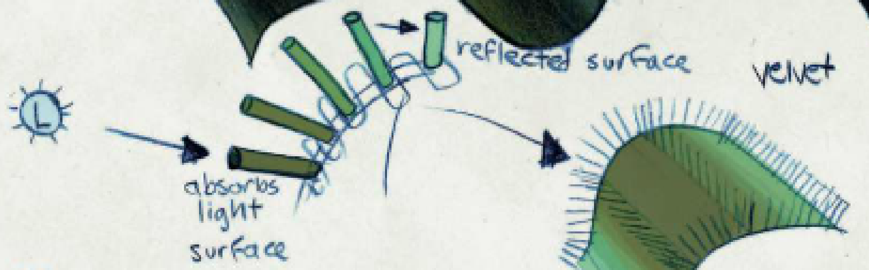
2. MATERIAL PROPERTIES

There are several different types of materials. We want to recognize the special properties material has on its surface to generate stronger illusions in our art. Highlights on different types of material are tricky, especially when it comes to differentiating velvet from silk. Imagine a light source directly facing a model wearing a silk shirt and velvet pants. Because velvet is made up of thousands of hairs facing upward, the ones facing directly towards the light absorb the light, while the ones facing away act like mirrors reflecting the same light. So, the centre where the light should be is now dark while the sides of the figure look lit.

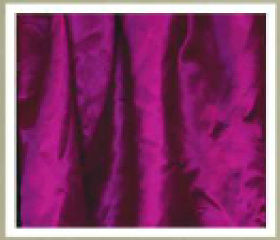
Silk is the opposite. The centre will shine brightly, and depending upon the thread count, the silk will have a more or less reflective surface to it emulating a metallic surface. So, as we can see, light will behave differently across the same model if wearing both fabrics.

Cotton is the least reflective and more or less absorbs the light. This material gives us very dull highlighted edges. Below is a diagram that gives a more comprehensive explanation for these materials and how they react to light.





A Cotton
This is a soft, brushed material with a traditional woof and warp weave perpendicular to the light source. It has no reflective properties, as the matte surface absorbs light, and so can be influenced by the colour of the light source.



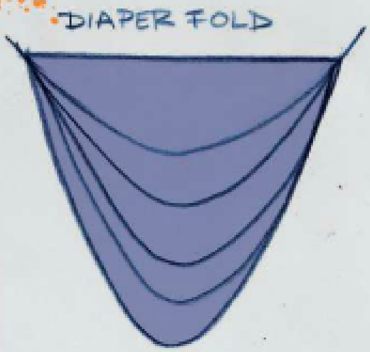
B Silk
This has a glossy surface appearance and a woof and warp weave perpendicular to the 'common' light source. This is highly reflective, but means the shadow spaces absorb more light so when painting darken down its shadowed surface like a metallic material.

C Velvet
This has a traditional base weave but the material is woven into the mesh perpendicular to it, so the fibres all face upwards at a height. These are semi-transparent fibres that absorb the light at their ends and reflect light at the edges. Reflections are controlled by the fibres' direction. Treat this similarly to silk but softer.

> “We want to recognize the special properties material has to generate stronger illusions in our art”

3. THE SEVEN FOLDS

Drapery worn has distinct architecture to it due to its continuous or tubular nature. The seams are caused where the folds occur and depending upon the thread size and number of stitch lines, the seams will have more or less of an influence on the folds. There are seven folds types to remember…



A Pipe fold

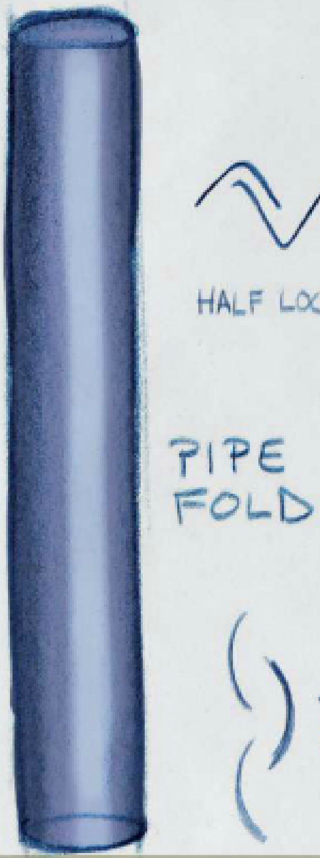
All folds are more or less a pipe of some kind, flattened or heightened depending on the material you're drawing. The name is the visual reminder of how they should be draw.

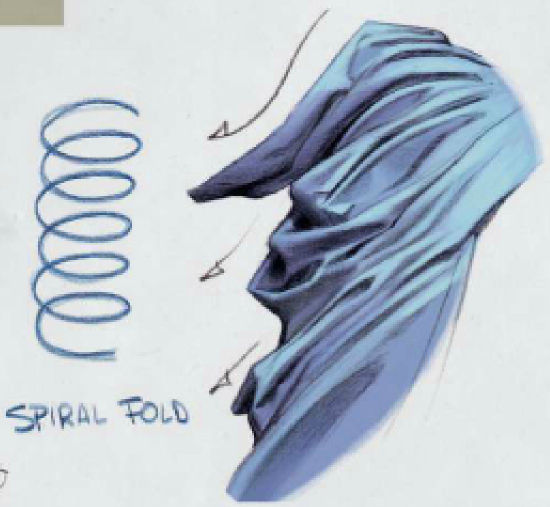
B Diaper folds

Diaper folds occur because of two tension points that are closer together than the cloth is wide. The folds alternate, and if you can imagine a sleeve is a complex series of diaper folds traversing from one side of the arm to the other, it makes drawing this often complex piece of clothing easier and more accessible.

C Zig-zag fold

These diamond or triangular-like folds can create what looks like a serrated edge to the material and are often seen in crumpled sleeves or at the back of heavy trousers and jeans, just behind the knee.





D Spiral fold

A bunch of drop folds, pipes or zig-zags all spun or wrapped around a form create these spiral folds. This fold is dominated by a series of S-curve rhythms as the material falls.

G Inert fold

Inert folds are folds that have no activity underneath them. Usually the material is the architecture for the material we see in a jumbled mess, such as a messy clothes pile, a scrunched scarf or a crumpled handkerchief.

E Half-lock fold

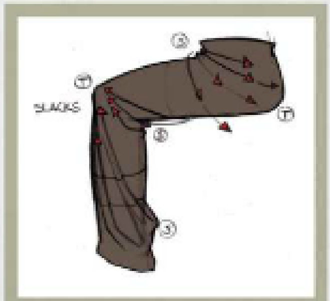
This is seen in material that turns back on itself. Half-locks occur in elbows, knees and the hips when these parts of the body are bent and tension forms at the joint.

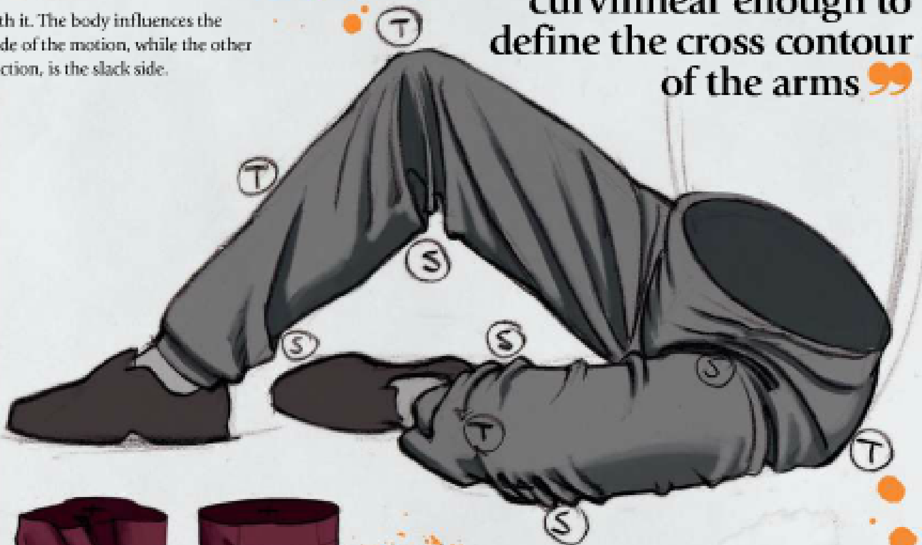
F Drop fold

This can look pretty much like a pipe fold, but it is vertical by nature, dropping with gravity towards the floor. It's found in heavy fabrics, such as formal dresses and curtains.

4. TENSION AND SLACK

Drapery is influenced by what is underneath it. The body influences the clothing by putting tension on the active side of the motion, while the other side of the limb, or the trailing side of the action, is the slack side.





> “The sleeves are curvilinear enough to define the cross contour of the arms”

A Tension folds

In the diagram showing the seated trousers, the rear and the knee holds the major points of tension. The back of the knee and the anterior side of the pelvis are the slack side of the trousers, where the material gathers and the most extreme pipes occur. The slack side is made up of the material coming from the tense side of the trouser, thus the lines of influence point to the tension.

B Slack folds

The next example is a sweatshirt sleeve both at rest and pulled up. Pulled up there are a few folds that are caused by the elbow or the ridge muscles influencing the surface, but nothing too significant or demanding by design. When gravity takes over, we see all sorts of interesting clusters of material switch back and forth down the length of the arm with several mini half-locks within them. And from the shoulder there are several drop folds descending in a spiral fashion until the material bunches up at the elbow.

C Combined folds

Here again is that same sweatshirt, only now I have drawn it in a sequence of three images to show the transformation taking place around the elbow. Due to the dense nature of the material, with a lot of weight attributed to it, the material falls quickly to the inside of the elbow and as the arm flexes further, more material blisters around the first few half-locks. Note how every flex starts with a primary fold that half-locks, then secondary folds form, and depending upon the type of material and the fit of the clothing will determine how many extra folds and how dense the pipes become as they form.

5. WRAP AROUND THE BODY

Drapery is one of the elements that helps define the volume of the body without needing any value. The linear nature of the material is a perfect cross contour to the cylinder forms of our body. Whether it is a sleeve, a collar, the waist, the leg (shorts), the ankle, the cross contour we draw, or the ellipse as a draw through, will help define the body mass and give believability to the drapery 'on' the figure.

This trench coat is a great example of the elliptical nature of the collar and the bottom of the coat. Note how the sleeves, while full of zig-zag folds, are curvilinear enough to define the cross contour of the arms giving them more visual weight.

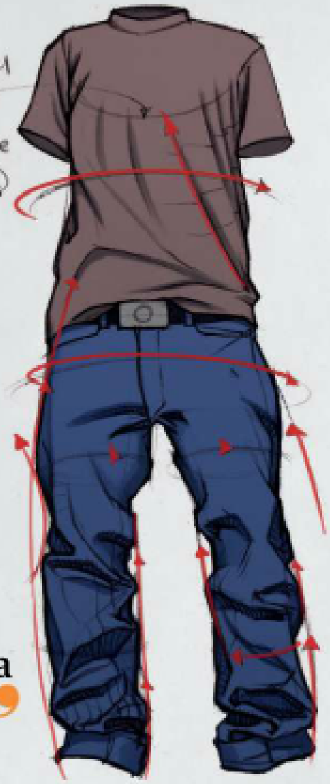
PRO TIPS

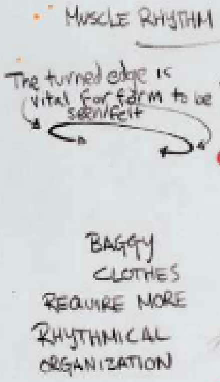
Use shortcuts

Learn a short hand for sitting, standing, jumping and shooting figures. What works for a short sleeve shirt will also work in part for a long sleeve shirt, so don't shy away from memorising this shortcut because it is not the actual cut you are going to use in your art. This short hand will be very useful when tying the objects together abstractly in the pictorial space. This can lead to stronger images and less attention applied to the extraneous stuff.

6. BAGGY CLOTHING

Baggy clothing has so many variables involved that it is easy to lose the figure in the noise very quickly. Remembering that the flat parts between the pipes are pressing against the body, we have two distinct contours on the outside of the body to think about. The contour of the body, and the contour of the maximum width the clothing can expand out to. These contours travel up the length of the body or with the flow of the legs. Also keep in mind that because baggy clothes are not photographically groomed to look photographically pleasing, the folds will appear out of control. To embellish on the design use cross contour lines across the pants from one leg to the other, carrying the rhythm of one set of folds into the next, visually tying all the noise together into a pattern.





7. RHYTHMICAL MOVEMENT

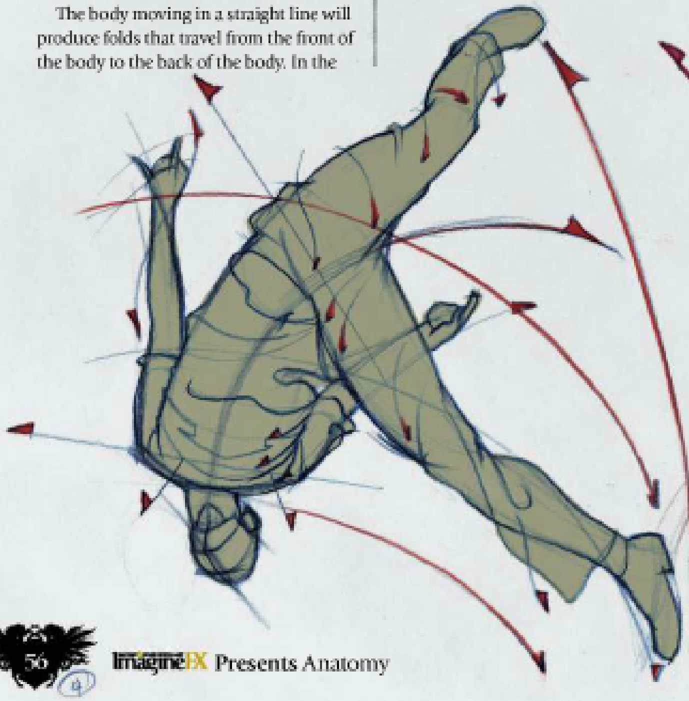
The body in motion is very tricky. I like to reference video, and like a detective, I like to examine photos and decide what type of motion might be taking place by watching how the folds move over the body as an action occurs.

Depending upon the nature of the movement, the folds will both react to the tension points forcing the material to stress with the action, and flow behind like a smoke trail. If the body is tucked in tightly like a skateboarder spinning a 540 degree stunt, the folds will all compress to the centre of gravity and radiate outward from that point. If the body cartwheels, the folds will flow across the body in the direction of the force of action.

The body moving in a straight line will produce folds that travel from the front of the body to the back of the body. In the sequence provided we can see where the tension points affect the surface and how the radiating folds point at the tension points generating the fold. If the body is in flight or working against heavy wind resistance, the material over the body will flicker over it like a flag waving in the wind, or like waves crashing up onto the shore, ala the back of the body.

These three different images show how different folds react to different types of body movements. These are designed with the folds reduced to simple line pathways to describe the spiral or linear movement of the folds around, down or outward from the core of the action.

"I like to reference video like a detective"



8. A PROCESS FOR DRAWING THE CLOTHED BODY

I start my images for this drapery workshop with a template, that is to say, I start with a mannequin under all the drapery. It helps me decide upon how much radiation the clothing has away from the body and how to get the folds to flow with or describe the action under the material. Whether male or female, single layer of clothing or layered drapery, the process begins with the mannequin.

Next I locate the mass of the clothing, or how much its maximum expansion is, and tie as much of the body space related to that garment with these guides as I can. It is like drawing an inflated mannequin over the top of the primary body.

On top of this new shape design I work on finding the tension points and the slack areas, or the areas where the material will radiate from or to. I look for any traversing lines that might pass through more than one limb and tie them together via the rhythm line. I look for any radiation in the folds and push that dynamic as much as possible to make the pose really active and lively. I try covering every direction I can, later eliminating any counter rhythmical lines or at least try to tie them back into the bigger mesh I am weaving.

The final stage can be found in one of two ways: The outlines serve as one edge, or the centre line, for the pipes that will be drawn over the surface to describe the volume of the fold and the surface distortion required for the type of material we are drawing.

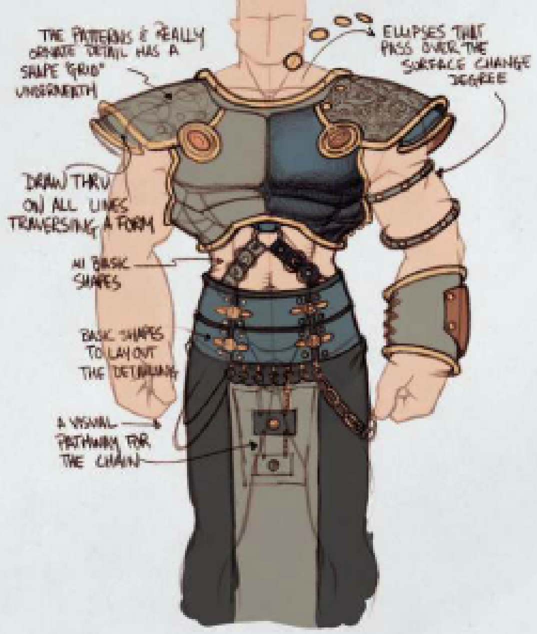
The other approach is to use the shadow patterns and map out their triangular designs over the action rhythms; what you might see versus what you interpret might be very different due to pushing the design for the sake of the drawing. These patterns will be altered to better the design of the image by either enhancing the underlying movement or by showing off what would normally be an obscured part of the body.

EXERCISE

Draw mannequins of your own invention and then 'inflate' them. Identify the tension points and make them simple and descriptive to the undersurface. Draw this tension to slack relationship using simple straight lines. Tie the front to the back, the top to the bottom using these lines. Next, attempt to build out the folds using the pipes, or cylinders as a starting point for the more complex stuff ahead. Or work on finding convincing shadows within the folds and experience making these patterns as a way of developing your visual library, the one in your head.

9. ARMOR UP

Hard surfaces are also included when we dress up the figure. We must remember to take advantage of the cross contours of the materials and to bend the lines a little in the perspective or the direction the volume is travelling across the body. This will ensure no confusion to the viewer and help 'maximise' the mass of the figure drawn. This drawing isn't realistic but feels believable because it follows the rules.



PART SEVEN

HOW TO DRAW IMAGINED FIGURES

Ron Lemen explains how memorising, observation and structures of composition will help you take your anatomy knowledge a step further

Understanding and communicating the structures that underpin everything will help you to communicate your ideas with your audience

Artist PROFILE

Ron Lemen
COUNTRY: US

Ron Lemen is a freelance artist and instructor who's worked in representational and fine art, illustration and entertainment art. He teaches drawing and painting classes, both traditional and digital, at Studio 2nd Street.
www.studio2ndstreet.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifz-figures

Art is old, really old: we are tapping into a universal language. This is a visual language that can be understood by others with whom we do not share a common tongue. We take advantage of this language through signs, symbols and other types of graphic communication, often subconsciously.

The systems of art are ancient. The Reilly method and the shape method, for instance, both date back to at least the fifteenth century, and two notable names in the history of art – Villard De Honnecourt and Luca Cambiaso – have used both of these concepts to great effect.

All the techniques used now by artists for drawing the figure will have their roots in old, time-tested concepts. Our shape-swapping method, for example – drawing a bowling pin for a forearm, a block for a hip and so forth – is nothing new. While the symbols may be newer, these concepts are nothing more than a simplified means to convincingly achieve a difficult end result.

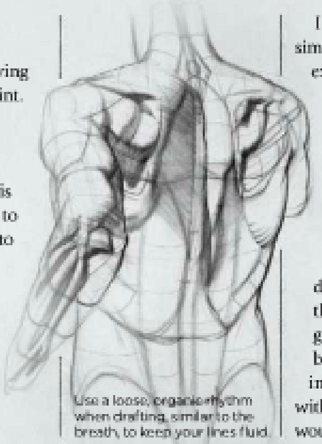
If you can master the methods that have stood the test of time and have been used by the great masters throughout the history of art, you will then be able to communicate with the clarity and verve that they did.

> **"Art is a visual language that can be understood by others with whom we do not share a common tongue"**

1. PROCESS FOR DRAWING

Let us look at a process for putting together a figure from life or from reference, such as a photo, then moving away from the original reference point. Finally I will explain how to draw a figure from memory and make it rhythmically animated.

I am structuring the process in this way because I often read about how to create an image, but not about how to make decisions on the processes of drawing and executing an image. Instead, the focus is usually on the journey from thumbnail to finished image. This tutorial will look at how to construct your drawings, and what skills to practice to strengthen your craft.



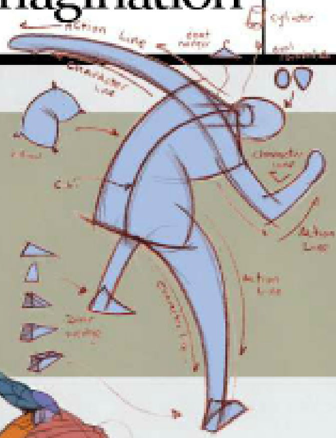
Use a loose, organic rhythm when drafting, similar to the breath, to keep your lines fluid.

I consider the process of drawing to be similar to breathing – inhaling and exhaling, a back and forth effort. When drafting, the movement is from loose to tight, or gestural to analytical and back again. The process of drawing evolves in several stages: the gesture (loose), construction (tight), contour (loose), notan (tight), gradation (loose), and accent/highlight (tight).

This process can then be broken down into more stages – starting with the construction and the notans/gradations per degree of scale, or the biggest shapes first, then working down into medium shapes and finally ending with the smallest shapes – what most would call details.

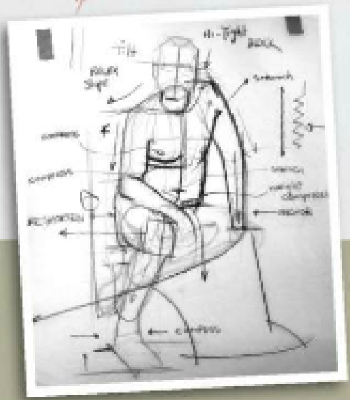
This is the process I use for studying from life or working from a photo. If you were to watch me work, you'd notice that I shift around between stages and methods as I draw, but that's because I am extremely comfortable with these processes now – and once you have totally mastered them too, you can choose the methods that work best for you.

So rather than labelling and finishing each step in a deliberate manner, I am more able to 'react' – I am exploring more immediate methods that can eliminate all the steps once they have been mastered. Take as much time as you need to master the stages, make them as intuitive as possible, and then forget them in order to make great, responsive images.



A Gesture

The gesture is the placement of the figure on the page, with the action and the scale all blocked in while swinging the arm in loose arcs. I have several techniques for beginning the drawing here – the examples shown include the envelope style, scribble style and stickman. Pick the method that feels most natural to you.



B Construction

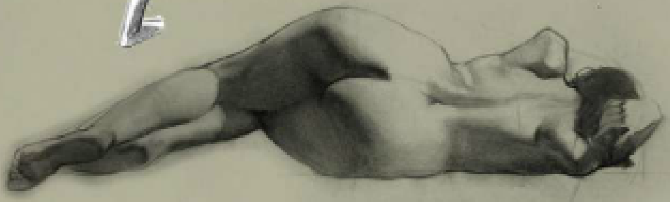
The construction stage has been covered in a number of the articles so far in this guide: it's very mechanical, measurable and easy to alter when kept rectilinear. This stage covers all the landmarks in the body and their relationships to each other, the muscle masses and how they flow and weave together, and foreshortening issues.

C Contour

The contour loosens up all those mechanical lines and brings a style to the drawing. Some might think Raphael or Egon Scheile, while others might think Adam Hughes, Greg Toccini or James Jean. Whatever direction or style you favour, this is the departure point from your figure feeling mechanised and architectural.

D Notan

Notan is Japanese for the concept of light and dark. This stage sets up how bright or ambient your light source is to your model – the darker the flat tones of the shadows, and the brighter the light. The tones should all be kept the same until all the shaded spaces have been well designed, balanced and composed to your liking.

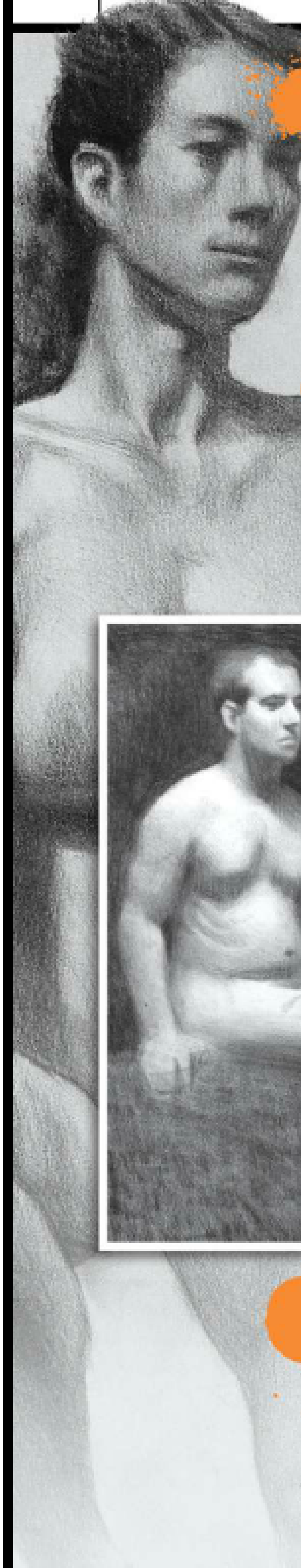


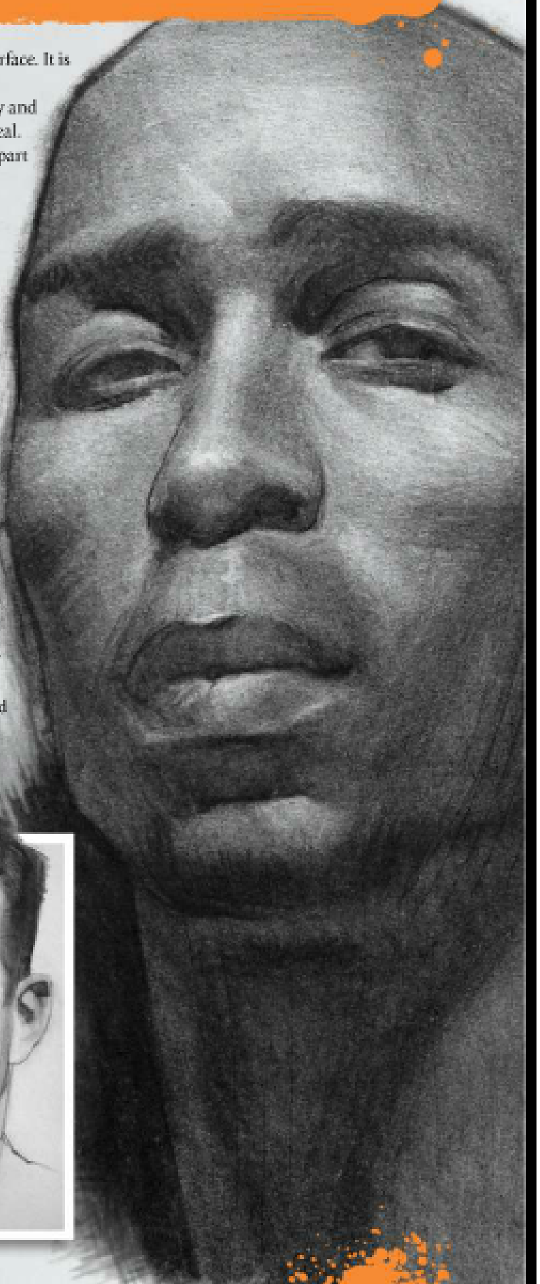
E Gradation

The gradation stage develops the volumes within whatever contrast key you have set up. Starting with the terminators or the contour edges of the figure in space, the values are adjusted mainly by darkening, only using the eraser to blow out the light in the shadows if the reflected light is powerful enough to generate that much influence.

F Highlights

The accents and highlights are the darkest and lightest values in the picture. The highlight is the highest edge facing the light and the accent is usually an occlusion or occluded space, not receiving direct or indirect light and usually deep hollows or contact points between two or more surfaces. I have given a few portrait examples as a close-up look at the highlights and accents.





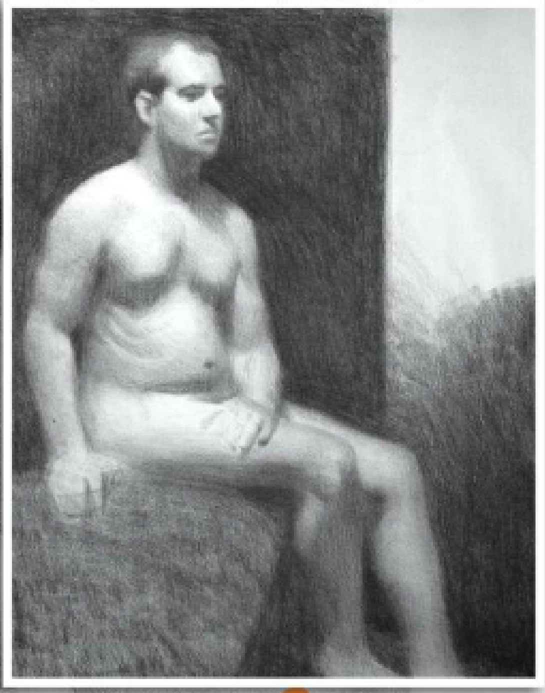
2. LEARN TO LOOK

To move away from references, we need exercises to help understand the scene you want to capture. As a portrait painter I prefer live reference, but I don't always get the luxury. As an illustrator I prefer not to use reference, because I am not capturing the same stillness in time. The practices are different but the results in the end should be similar: a living, breathing surface. It is all an attempt at suspension of disbelief, to take the viewer away and convince them this moment is real.

To do this, reference is only a part of the picture, the rest has to be 'felt' – does it 'feel' right when you look at it? The feeling is something deep inside that stirs

> **"To move away from references, we need exercises to understand the scene you want to capture"**

your senses into believing what it sees is really happening. Rubens was one of the masters of this, as were Giambattista Tiepolo, Dean Cornwell and Norman Rockwell, among many others. These artists 'invented' their paintings while using living inspiration as the basis for their creations. This applies to both figures and to portraits, and I have provided several of each type as examples. These are all from life, of course.



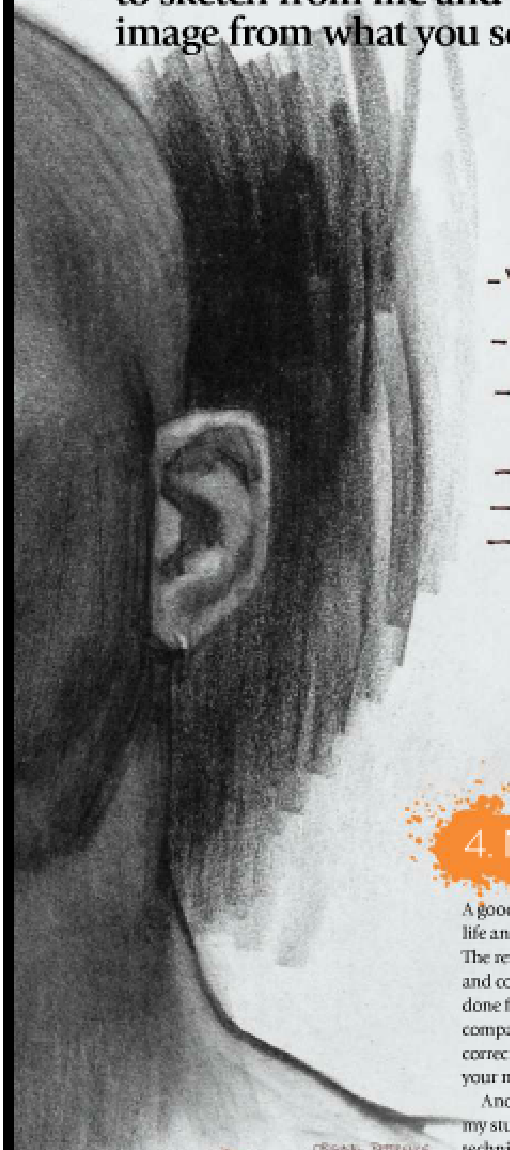
3. BREAK AWAY METHODS

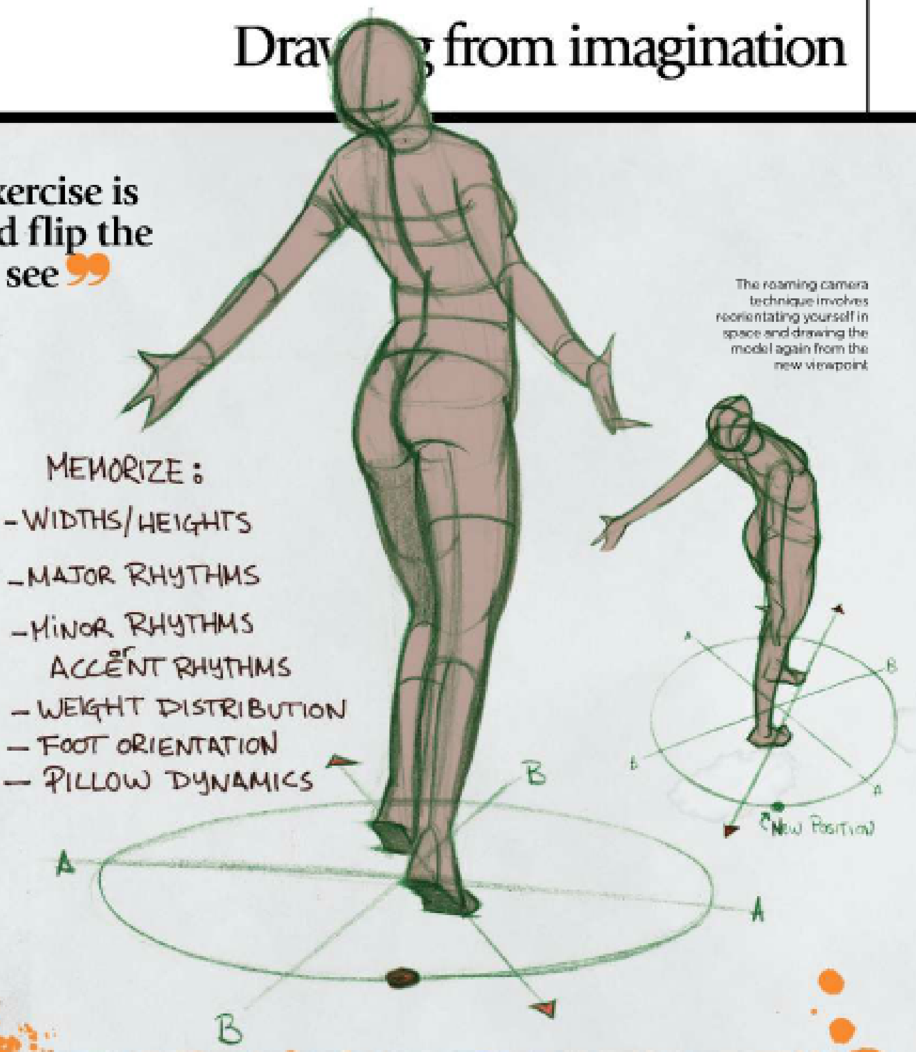
To break away from using references, you need to understand drawing from life. You look up, you take in information, you look down, you remember, and you react (or output) what you thought you saw. This is memorisation. You are already doing it, but it's just that the time between looking and outputting is so short that it goes unnoticed.

Now to test this, set your pad up in another part of the room from your model, or in another room. Find a spot in the room you favour as your view, take in what you can, then go and draw it. As you learn how to retain information for longer periods of time, distance yourself further and further from the reference to hold onto that data longer.

Once you have tried the method a few times, test yourself further: set up and draw from one position then, when you go home that night, start the drawing again, this time entirely from memory. Recall as much as you can from the image you created earlier. The more you do this, the more you will remember – this is a muscle you are activating, not a concept.

> A good memory exercise is to sketch from life and flip the image from what you see





The roaming camera technique involves reorientating yourself in space and drawing the model again from the new viewpoint

4. MEMORY EXERCISES

A good memory exercise is to sketch from life and flip the image from what you see. The reversed image can then be checked and corrected using a mirror. Any sketch done from memory that you can then compare with a reference is useful for correcting your judgment and sharpening your memory.

Another exercise that I like to give to my students is the roaming camera technique. Sit in a room in one position four quadrants and then draw a line attaching both heels and another line attaching either big toes or little toes. Redraw the circle and mark your position on it, front and centre, and redraw the interior information of the circle with regards to your new position. This will be the information rotated from where you first started.

Now, starting with rhythm and loose scribbles of some kind, gesture out the

> Compare a sketch done from memory with the initial reference to help correct your judgment

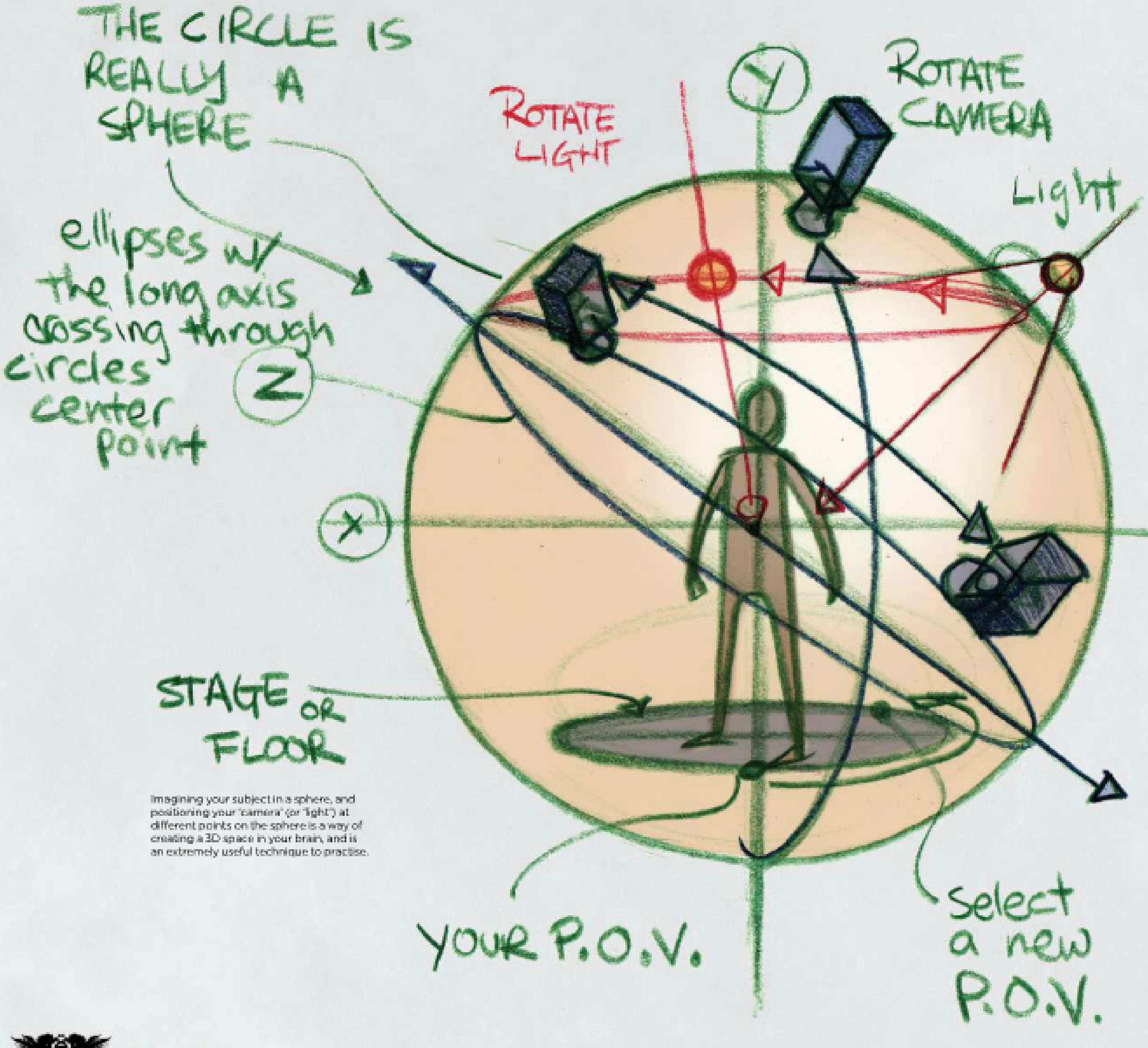
to the model. Now imagine a circle drawn around the model on the floor; this is the camera track. Make a note of where you are on that circle with a hash mark to indicate your location – it should be at the front centre of the circle.

On that same circle, place a second mark in a different place on the circle – this will be where you sit for your second drawing. From the original position, set up a grid in the circle dividing it into figure thinking of the pillow-shaped core and its bent and stretched sides. Think about the limbs and the cylinder forms they make when simplified. Gesture in the pose from this new position, and then compare the new drawing with the original one. Do they feel like they both belong to the same 360-degree view? Is the balance correct? Is the weighting correct? Are the limbs correct to the action, or did you reverse them?

5. THINK IN THREE DIMENSIONS

"Draw an imaginary sphere around the subject, and just as with our pivot/rotation diagrams, you will use the model as the pivot"

In addition to the circle on the floor, we can elevate or lower our view with a circle drawn all the way around the model, at any distance. This circle is really a sphere, and just as with our pivot/rotation diagrams, you will use the model as the pivot. Rotate the 'camera' anywhere around the model, and project a cone from the virtual camera's lens to determine what you will be viewing. In addition to the camera, you can also do this with your light source: alter the position of the lighting on the model, and practise your lighting invention. In a way, we are constructing from memory a virtual 3D space in our brain. This is what it means to have an active imagination and a photographic memory. You are not just memorising an instance, you are memorising an entire moment, scene or volumetric space all at once.



Imagining your subject in a sphere, and positioning your 'camera' (or 'light') at different points on the sphere is a way of creating a 3D space in your brain, and is an extremely useful technique to practise.

6. GRIDDING WITH ABSTRACTION

This last technique will be useful for those of you who are trying to tie your compositions together better.

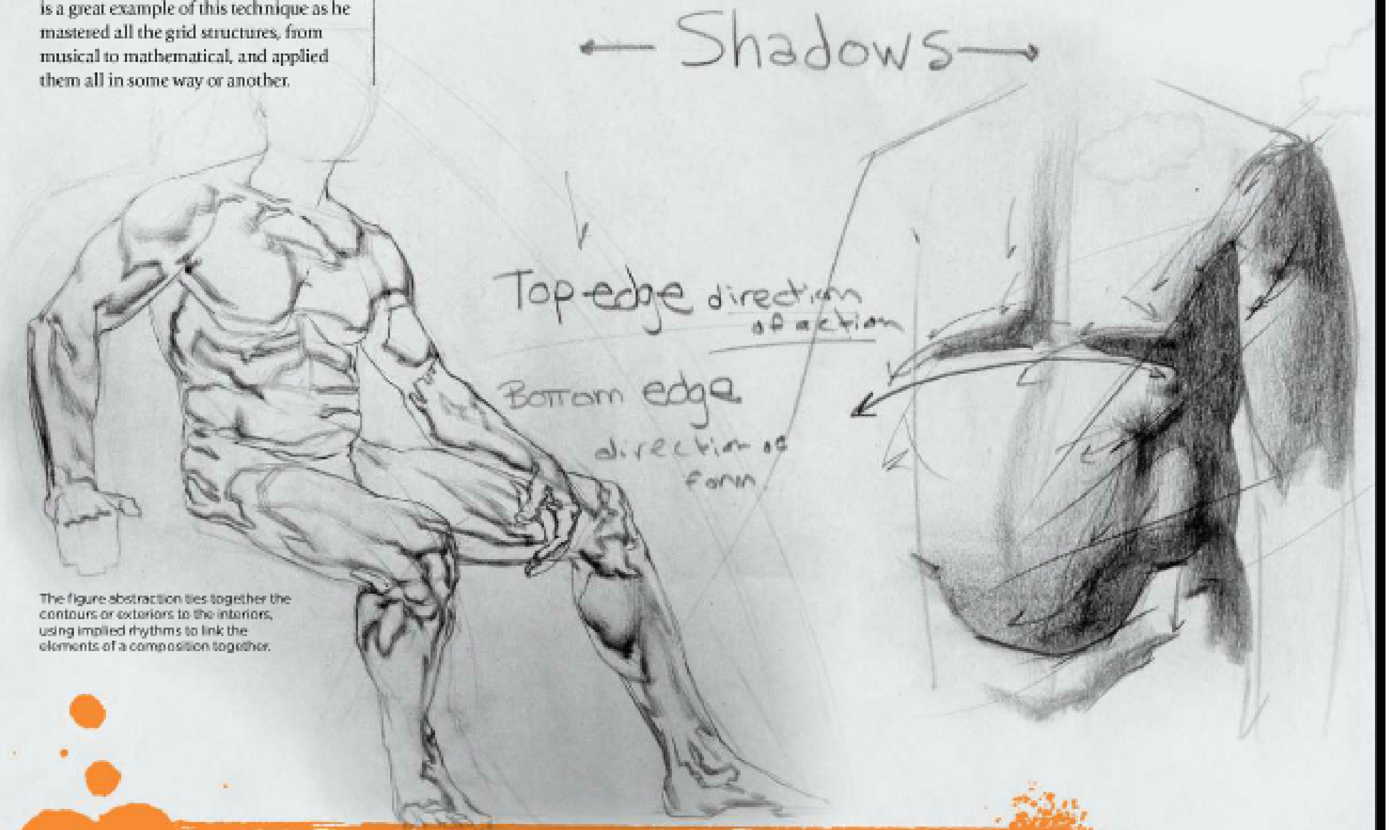
The Reilly Abstraction, which we have discussed previously, is actually a part of a bigger concept. To construct or 'abstract' an image through the use of implied rhythms that link to one another, weaving a larger tapestry of information together, is a process that comes from the ancient art of tapestries, an extremely technical artform tied together with hidden geometry and complex calculations. This artform was at its height in the Renaissance, and Peter Paul Rubens is a great example of this technique as he mastered all the grid structures, from musical to mathematical, and applied them all in some way or another.

Your canvas is a sacred square, designed in an ancient ratio that has ideal divisions built into it with regards to the corners and their distance to each other. The great Renaissance painters obsessed over these grids and structures: it is little wonder that we marvel over their paintings. Structure was so important that details such as the number of blades of grass, and their orientation in regards to other elements, would be carefully worked out.

The figure abstraction is a tipping point for your understanding of this great tool. It ties together the contours or exteriors to the interiors, from shadow patterns to anatomical relationships and back and forth between all of these elements.

The more you engage in this practice, the more you will see it in everything, everywhere. It is like a magical matrix, which is another name for the gridding process of painting.

> **"Our canvas is a sacred square, designed in a ratio with ideal divisions built into it"**



The figure abstraction ties together the contours or exteriors to the interiors, using implied rhythms to link the elements of a composition together.

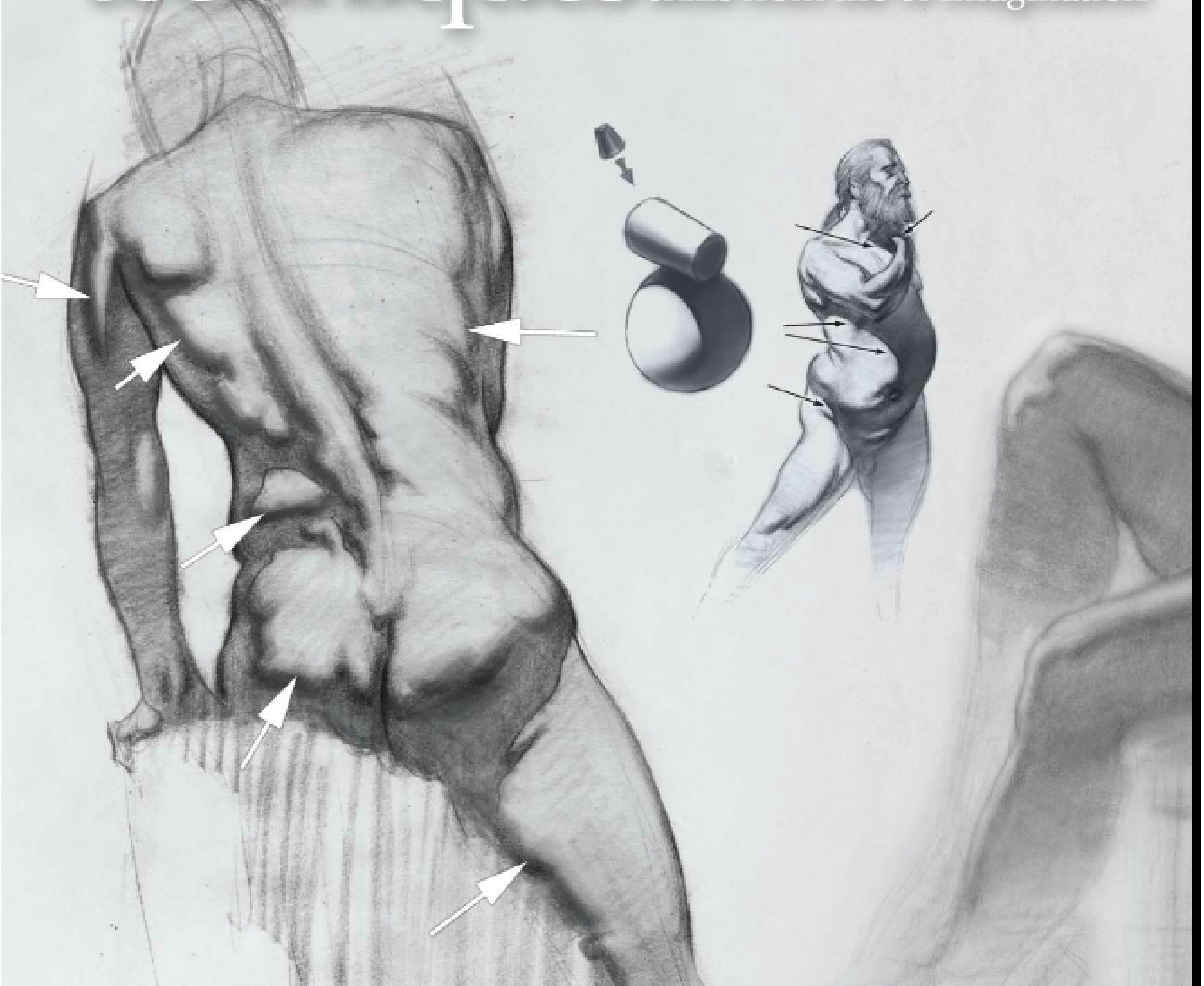
7. CLOSING COMMENTS

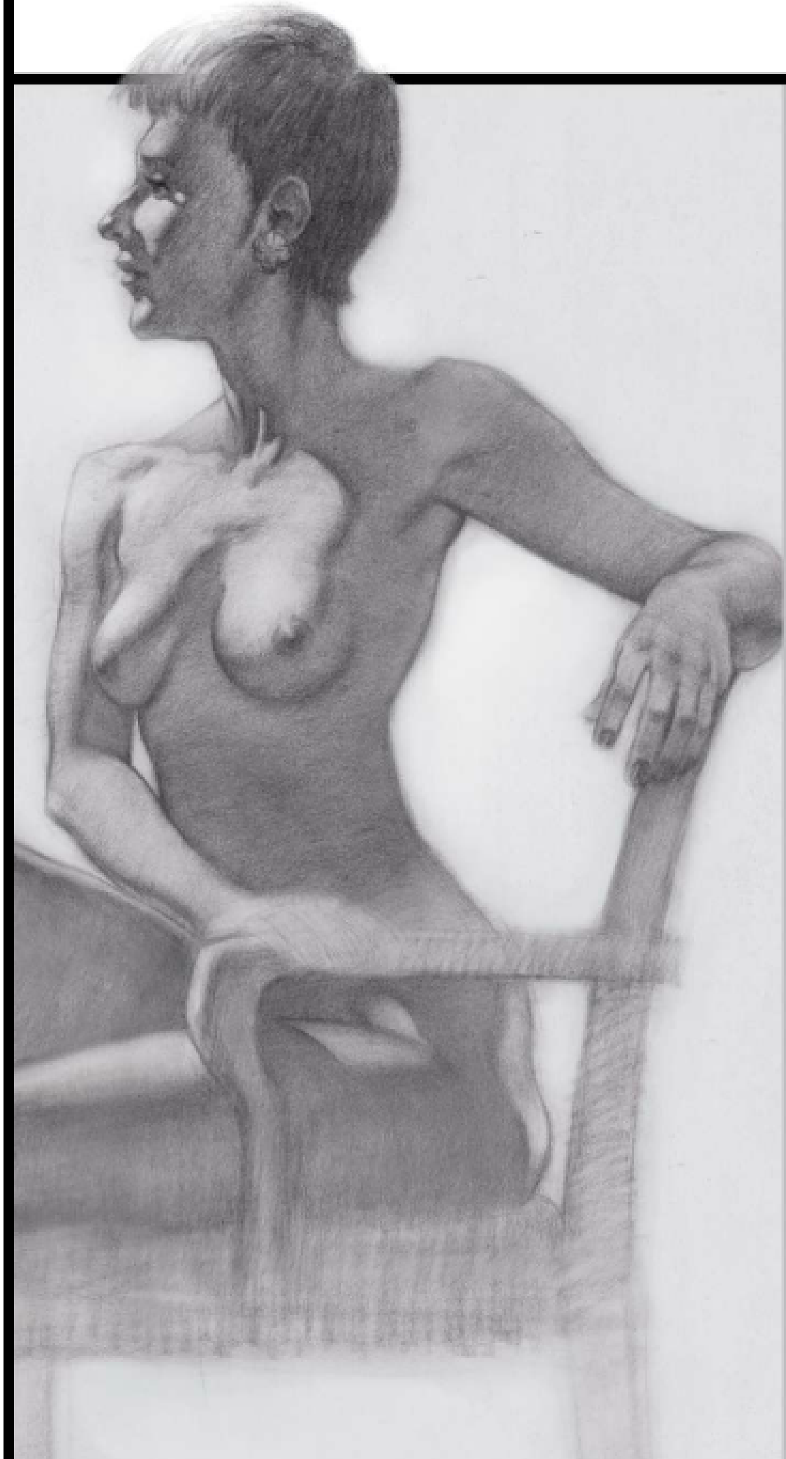
My intention with this tutorial is to give you a little taste of the technique of drawing with abstractions – it would take a whole series of articles dedicated solely to this concept to get this abstract toolset to really mean something. I leave you with this because I want you to think harder about the pictures you make, and what they are really trying to say. I want to offer you a set of tools and then give you the chance to test them out, throw them against the wall, stomp on them, and prove them right or wrong. The fact is that making pictures is not easy. It is a science, and it requires a lot of learning and practise. It is part sport, part philosophy; but the more you are aware of what goes into your craft, the more you'll push yourself and the better your work will become as a result.

> **"The fact is that making pictures is not easy. It is a science, and it requires a lot of learning and practise"**

Figure drawing techniques

Improve your figure drawing skills from life or imagination





Chris Legaspi

As well as being a leading concept artist, Chris Legaspi also runs the Fresh Designer website, devoting his time to sharing techniques for better figure drawing.

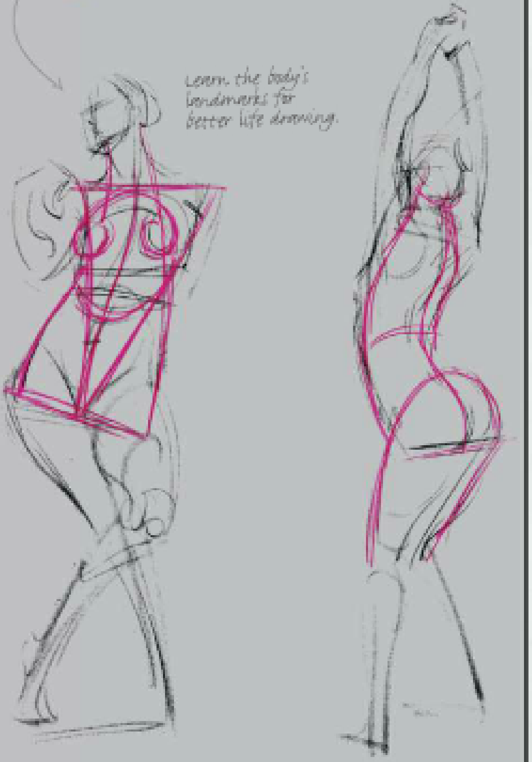
Learn how to add the sense of weight to your figure sketches.
Turn to page 68

Workshops

Improve your figure drawing

66 Drawing gesture and motion
Discover the techniques to draw dynamic figures in motion.

70 Light and form sketching
Learn to render your figure drawings with realistic light and shade.



> “Creating the feeling of light and shade, and doing it well, can have a profound effect on the viewer”

Chris Legaspi, page 70

PART ONE

DRAWING GESTURE AND MOTION

Excellent figure drawing is a vital skill for any artist. **Chris Legaspi** shares some techniques and tips for creating powerful and dynamic figures

Artist PROFILE

Chris Legaspi

COUNTRY: US

See more of Chris's figure work shops at his website

www.freshdesigner.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES

www.bit.ly/ifz-gesture

Gesture can be defined as the thrust, action, intent or life force that drives the pose of the figure. In other words, gesture is the action of the pose. "What is the figure doing?" is the key question the artist must answer for the viewer.

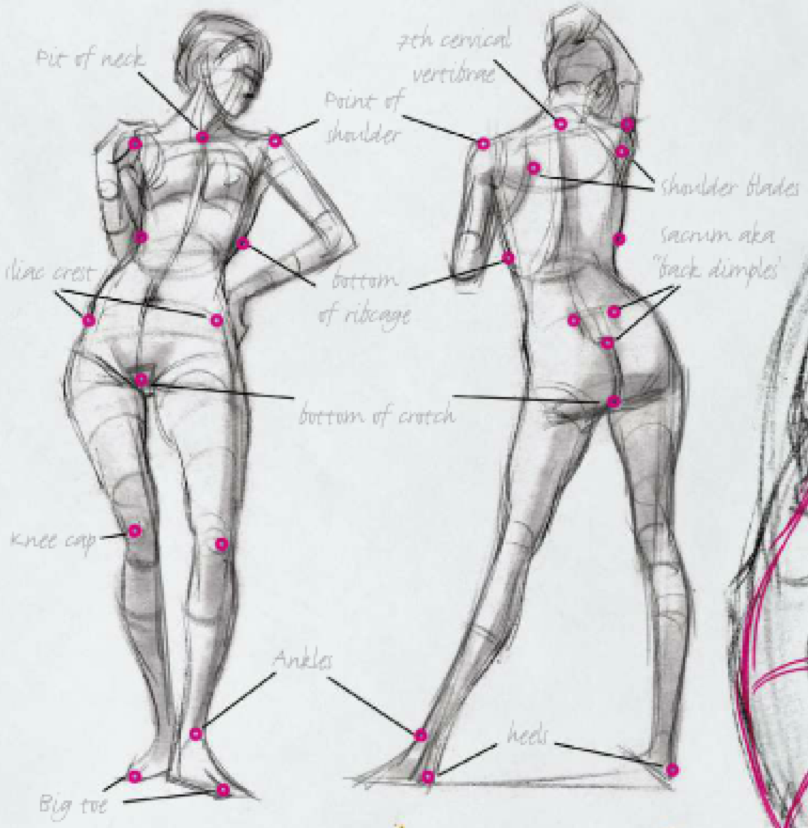
In figure drawing, gestures serves to give our figures life and movement, even in a still, two-dimensional drawing. Because of this, we must give gesture primary consideration if we want our figures to come alive.

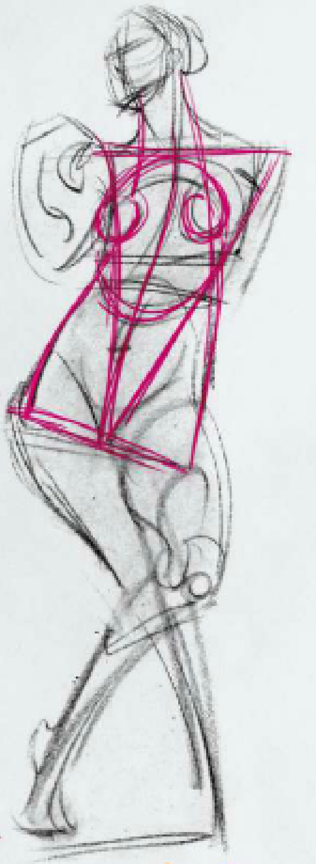
Gesture is not only the first concept or idea to consider in figure drawing, but it is also the initial step – the cornerstone from which an artist can build their image. Therefore, the foundation of all great figure drawings is gesture!

In this workshop, I will share some simple and elegant strategies for understanding and mastering this critical first step in figure drawing. These will not only add movement and flair to your figures but will also bring your drawings to life. Let's get started!

1. HOW TO OBSERVE

First, pause and take a few moments to simply observe. Observe the head and torso. Note the curvature of the spine, the direction of the model's gaze, the distribution of weight, and the direction the limbs are pointing in. Since gesture is the thrust or action of the pose, the key question to ask yourself is: "What is the model doing?" Learning how to see properly is key to unlocking the complexities of figure drawing.





2. KNOW THE LANDMARKS

Landmarks are key points on the body that I use to measure, construct or locate other key points of anatomy. Some of the key landmarks I use are: the pit of the neck, the points of the shoulder bones, the bottom of the ribcage, the iliac crest (peaks of hip bone), the bottom of the crotch, the kneecaps, ankles and big toes, the seventh cervical vertebrae (upper back), the scapulae (shoulder blades), and the sacrum (often seen from behind as two back dimples).

3. THE LONG AXIS ACTION LINE

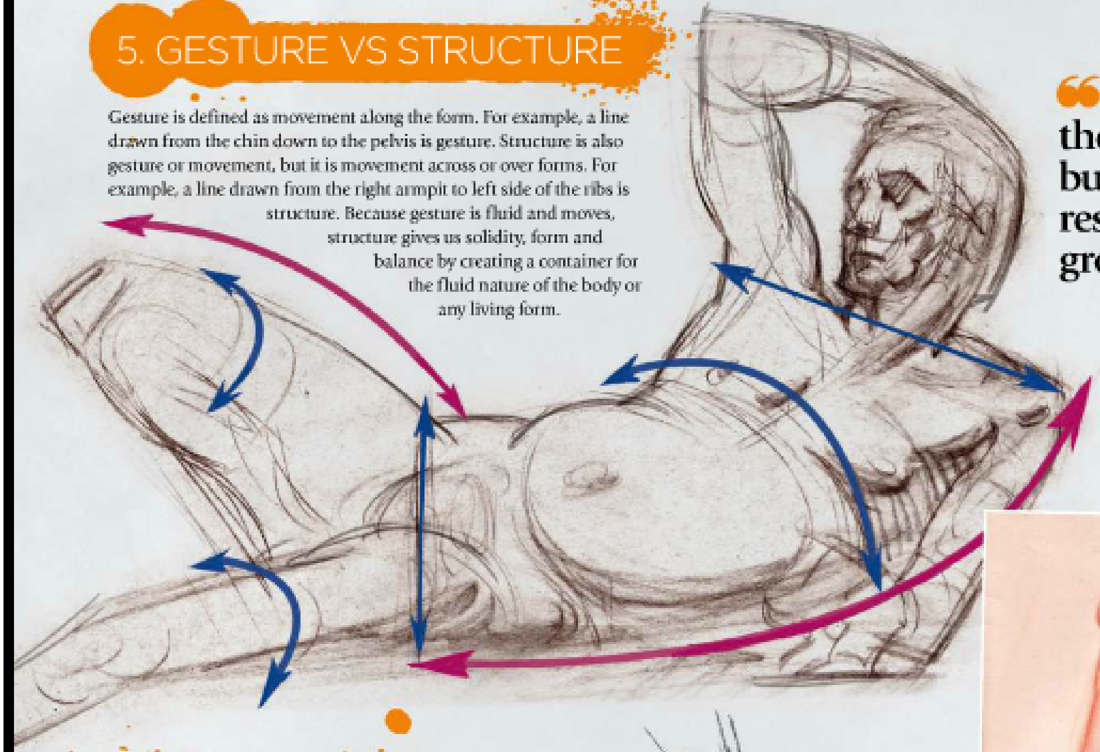
The Reilly Method breaks down figure drawing into lines, gestures and forms, and uses lines represent the axis or direction of the major forms, and express the action of the figure. To draw the action of the pose, first I locate the long axis. The long axis, or action line, is the longest uninterrupted line that runs either through the form or at the edge of it. I like to make the long axis or action line as long and fluid as possible. Every form, even the smallest, has a long axis.

4. RHYTHMS OF THE BODY

Rhythms are the natural flow of anatomy that runs through the body. For example, a line drawn from the pit of the neck to the crotch is the centreline rhythm. There are also rhythms that run from the neck to the hip. Just like knowing how to look for key landmarks, I use rhythms as another tool to locate key anatomy, emphasise the gesture and lengthen the action line, which adds a sense of movement and believability.

5. GESTURE VS STRUCTURE

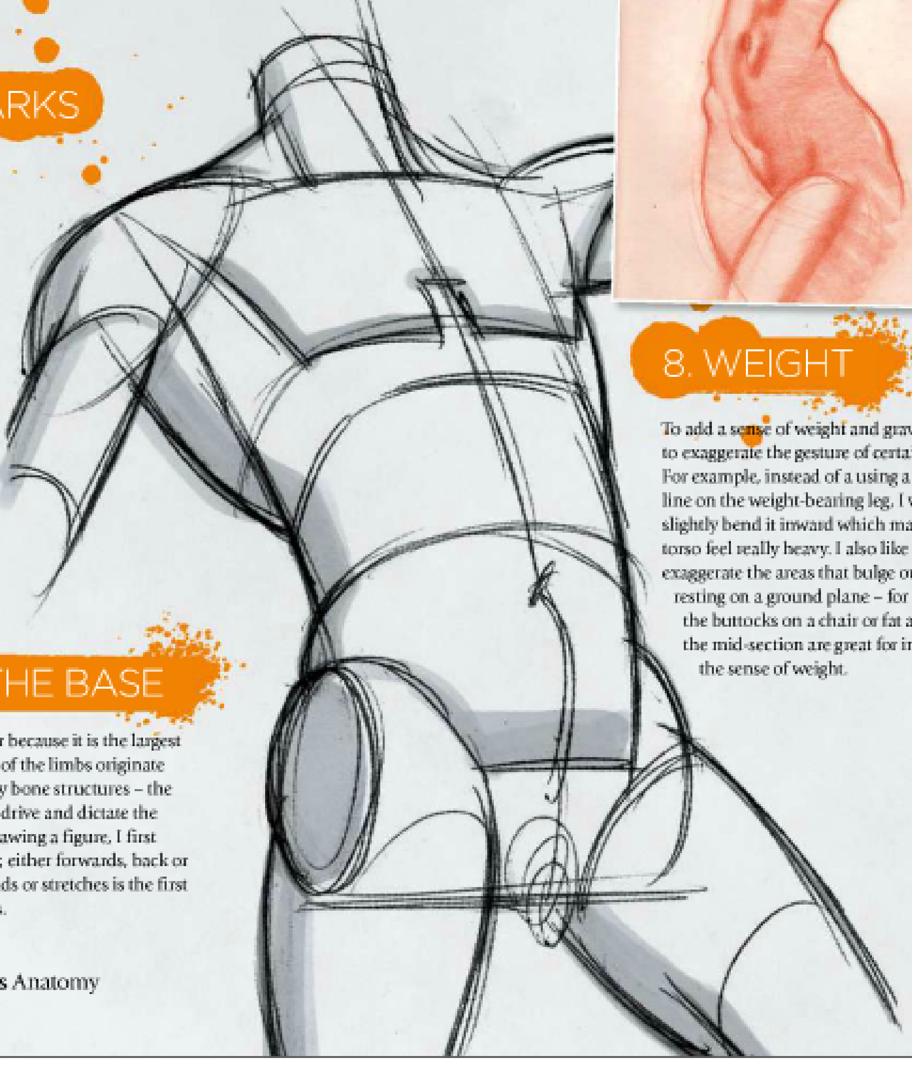
Gesture is defined as movement along the form. For example, a line drawn from the chin down to the pelvis is gesture. Structure is also gesture or movement, but it is movement across or over forms. For example, a line drawn from the right armpit to left side of the ribs is structure. Because gesture is fluid and moves, structure gives us solidity, form and balance by creating a container for the fluid nature of the body or any living form.



“Exaggerate the areas that bulge out when resting on a ground plane”

6. MAKING MARKS

I generally only make three types of marks: straights, C-curves, and S-curves. Even though straight lines generally don't exist in organic forms, I like using them to measure, or show weight and the feeling of speed. C-curves are everywhere in the body; around 80 per cent of the marks I make in figure drawing will be C-curves. S-curves are when two C-curves are joined together, and is also known as a twist. S-curves are great for long, fluid action lines and indicating movement.



7. TORSO AS THE BASE

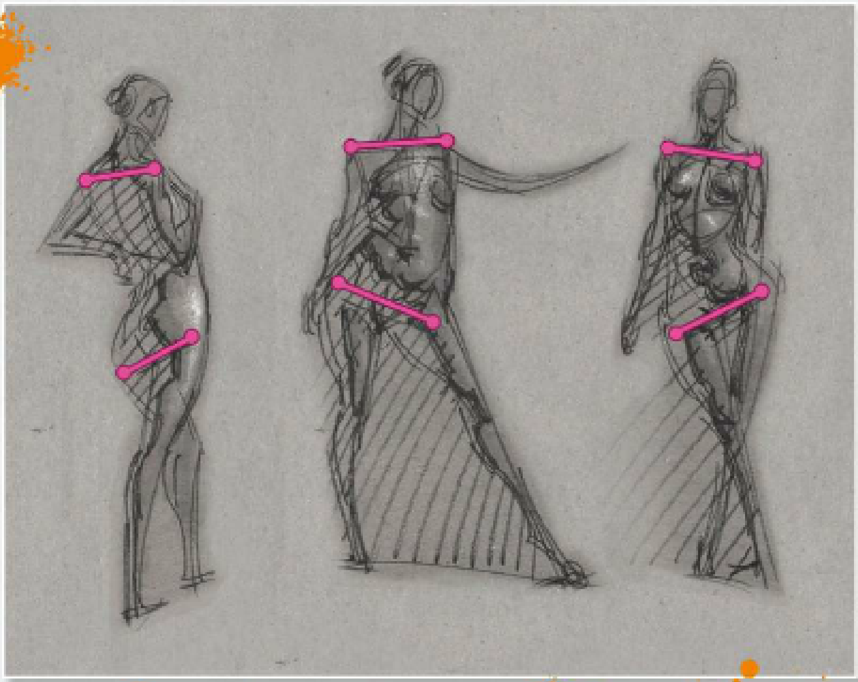
The torso is important to consider because it is the largest mass of the human body, and all of the limbs originate from it. The torso also has two key bone structures – the ribcage and the hipbone – which drive and dictate the movement of the limbs. When drawing a figure, I first observe how the torso is bending; either forwards, back or sideways. Observing where it bends or stretches is the first place I look to locate the long axis.

8. WEIGHT

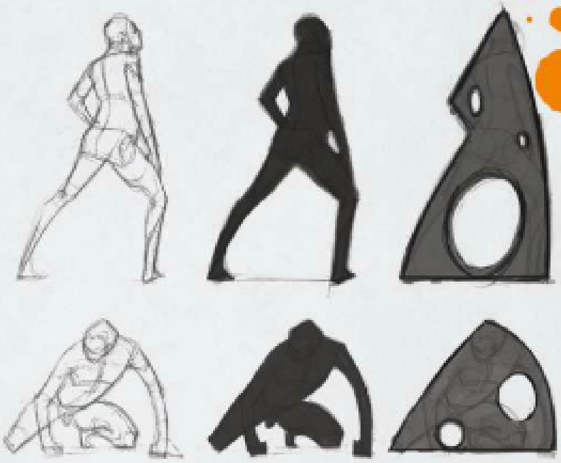
To add a sense of weight and gravity, I like to exaggerate the gesture of certain forms. For example, instead of a using a straight line on the weight-bearing leg, I will slightly bend it inward which makes the torso feel really heavy. I also like to exaggerate the areas that bulge out when resting on a ground plane – for example, the buttocks on a chair or fat around the mid-section are great for increasing the sense of weight.

9. CONTRAPPOSTO

Contrapposto is an Italian word that means 'opposite' or 'counterpose'. It is caused when bodyweight is distributed unevenly, which causes the angle of the hips to oppose or 'counter' the angle of the shoulders. I use contrapposto to add a dynamic tension or a relaxed, realistic feeling. I also use contrapposto as a tool to locate either the angle of the hips or the shoulders when one or the other is hidden from view.



"Use silhouettes to design the big shapes that emphasise the pose's action"



11. SILHOUETTE

Silhouette is the outer edge of the figure or form. It is the visual space that a figure takes up in a picture plane. I use silhouette to design big shapes that emphasise the action of the pose. For example, a triangular shape can add stability, weight or a powerful upward thrust. I also use silhouette to give the viewer an instant 'read' as to what the figure is doing.

12. MANY WAYS TO DRAW

There are many ways to draw gestures and figures. I was trained in and use the Reilly Method, which uses a lot of rhythmic lines and abstract shapes to design and construct the figure. Some artists like squiggly, calligraphic lines. Some artists like to use tone. There is no right or wrong way to draw the human body – I say learn all the methods and choose what works best for you and the pose.

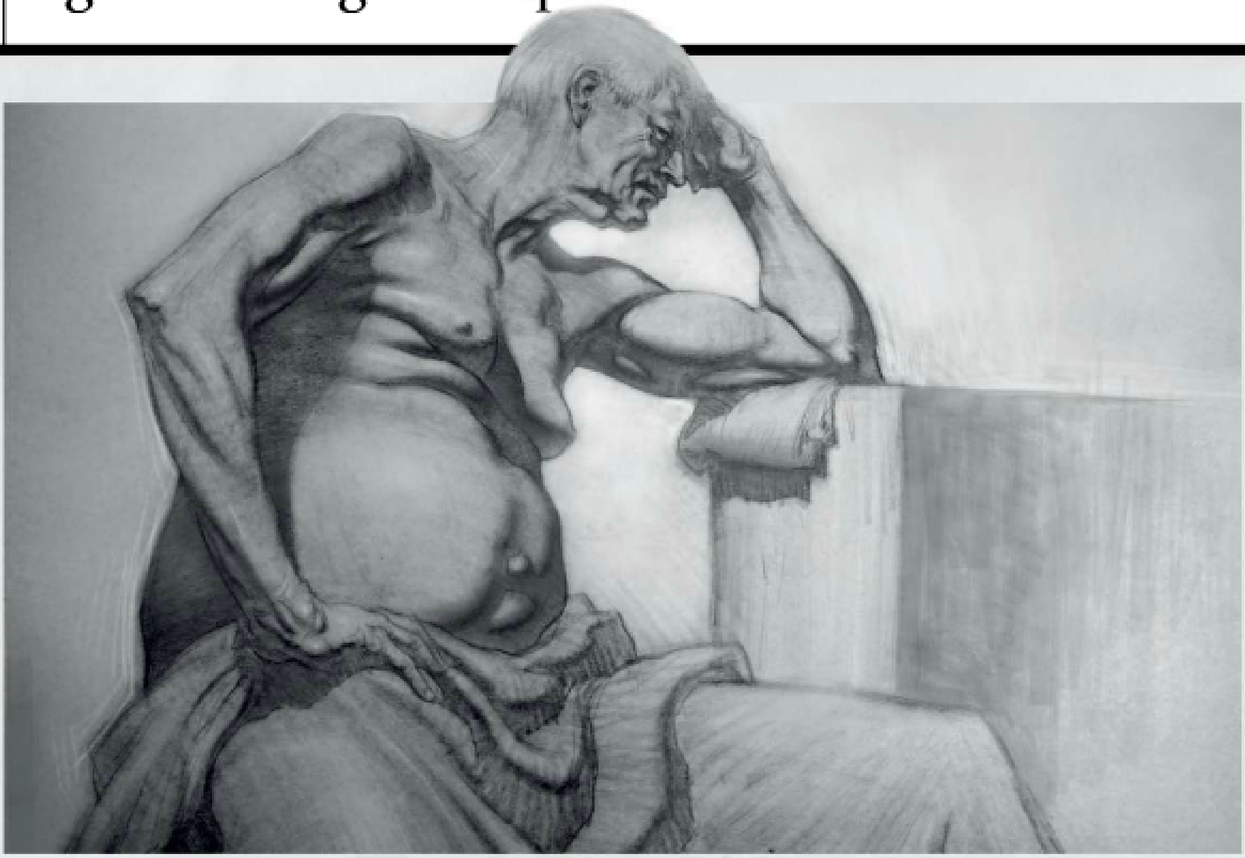
10. RELATE TO THE HEAD

The Reilly Method suggests starting with known quantities, such as where the head is in relation to the rest of the body. I don't just relate to the head with the long axis, but also try to relate every part or action back to the head. I connect everything, from the hips and arms to fingers and toes. Since thought precedes action, this is a great tool for adding an extra layer of life and believability. I also use this concept to measure and design simpler, bolder shapes.

PRO TIPS

Life drawing

Draw from life as much as possible. The most ideal setting for this is a figure drawing workshop with a live model. If sketching a live model is not possible, take a sketchbook to your favourite cafe, bookstore or even restaurant – any public place is great for capturing studies and quick gestures of the people around you in your environment. There is absolutely no excuse not to draw from life.



PART TWO

LIGHT AND FORM SKETCHING

Artist PROFILE

Chris Legaspi
COUNTRY: US

See more of Chris's figure work shops at his website
www.freshdesigner.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifz-light

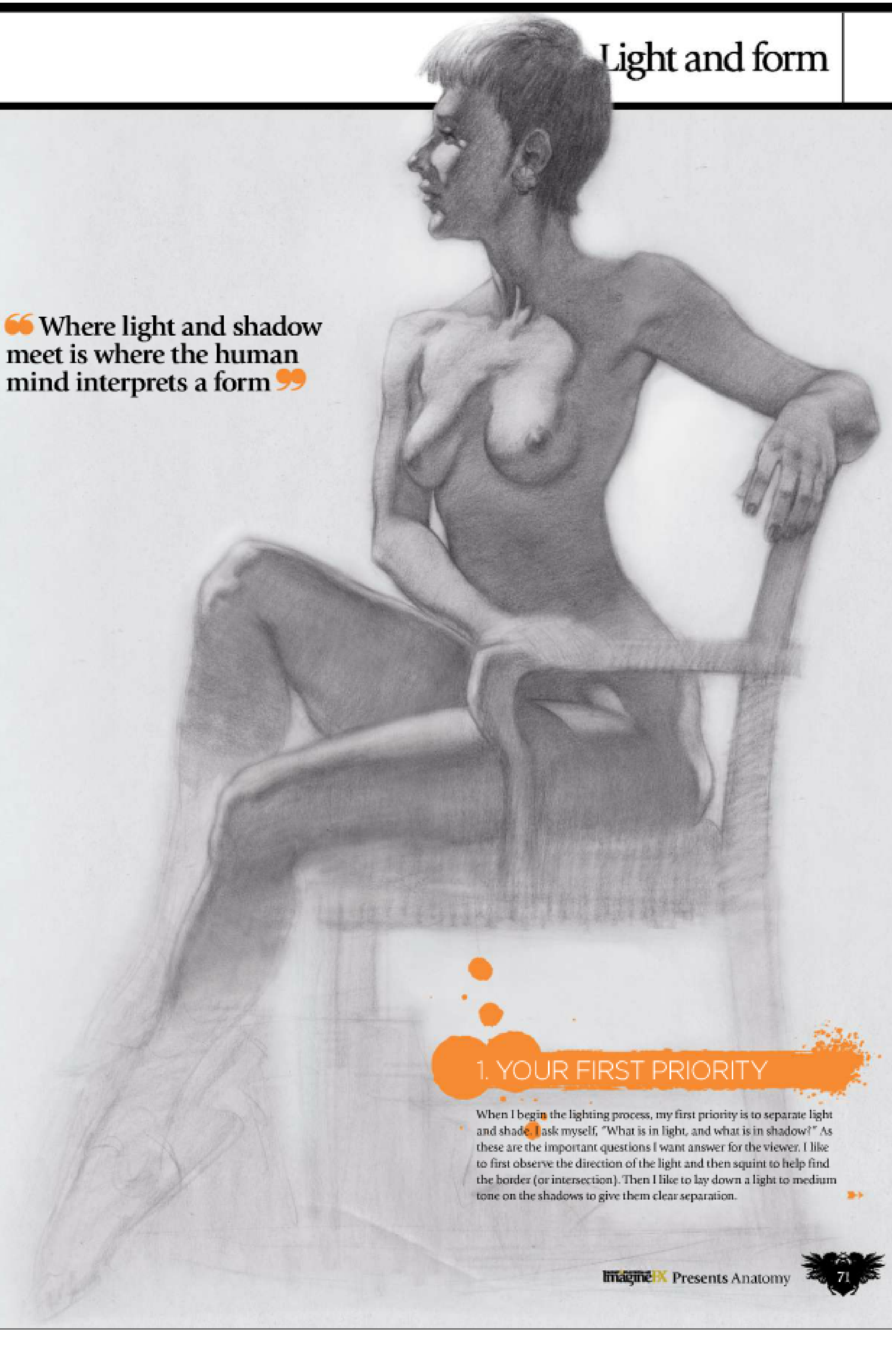
Creating the illusion of light, shade and form is a powerful tool. **Chris Legaspi** shares some strategies for creating beautiful and believable lighting

Light is how we see forms, and how we see our world; shadow is the absence of light. Where light and shadow meet is where the human mind interprets a form. Because this phenomenon resonates so deeply in the human mind, creating the feeling of light and shade, and doing it well, can have profound effect on the viewer.

In the natural world the effect of light and shadow is a very real, three-dimensional phenomenon. An artist can only create the illusion of light and shadow because of the limitations of our medium and materials. This is especially true when we are dealing with a flat, two-dimensional picture plane.

Because light is such a massive and important subject, I have attempted to highlight a few of the principles related to figure drawing. I will first attempt to show how light and shadow work, and then show some strategies that can be applied to figure drawing from life and drawing from imagination.

These principles and strategies will help to make your forms and figures feel solid, three-dimensional, and add a layer of believability, so let's get started!



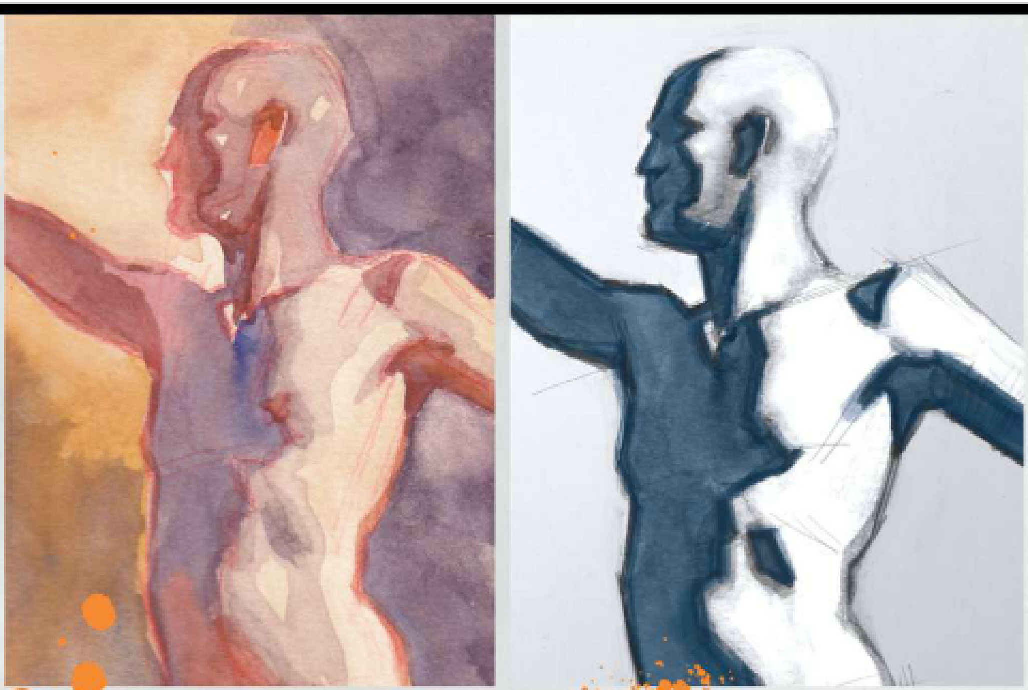
“Where light and shadow meet is where the human mind interprets a form”

1. YOUR FIRST PRIORITY

When I begin the lighting process, my first priority is to separate light and shade. I ask myself, "What is in light, and what is in shadow?" As these are the important questions I want answer for the viewer. I like to first observe the direction of the light and then squint to help find the border (or intersection). Then I like to lay down a light to medium tone on the shadows to give them clear separation.

2. THE POWER OF PLANES

Planes are a form principle that describes how the surface area of a form reacts to a light source. How much light an object or area receives depends on the varying degree to which planes face the light. Inversely, how dark an object or area is depends on the degree to which the planes turn away from light. In simpler terms, a change in value means a change in planes.



Using clearly defined light and shade shapes help the viewer quickly identify form.

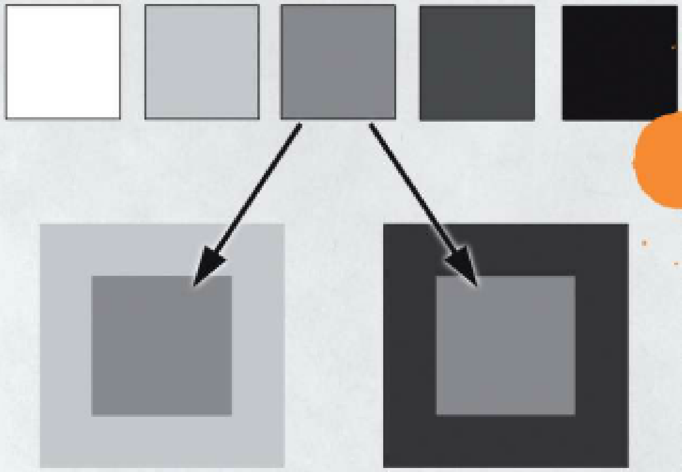
3. LIGHT AND SHADOW SHAPES

Just as the figure has a clearly defined shape or silhouette, light and shadow patterns also have their own shapes. The light and shadow shapes, and their relationships to each other, give the viewer a way to quickly identify form. In fact, I like to use shadow shapes as a design element. As we'll see later in this workshop, shadow shapes can help to define form and even add gesture and movement.

4. VALUES AND THE VALUE RANGE

Value refers to how light or dark something is, and is often measured on a scale numbered from 1-10 (or 0-10). In this model, the number 1 represents either pure white (or black), and number 10 represents the inverse (either pure black or white). In between these two there is an infinite range of values, especially when observing nature but because of limitations of media and materials, it is not possible to have an infinite range of values as nature does.

> “In between pure black and pure white there is an infinite range of values”



PRO SECRETS

Shade under the spotlight

A good way to study light and shade is to draw from a subject lit by a single dominant light source that has little to no bounce light or environment lights. This set up is often referred to as 'spotlighting'. A strong spotlight makes for a clearly visible shadow pattern, and well-defined core shadows, cast shadows and highlights. Whether working from life or a photo, this method helps me to focus on designing good shapes and refining edges.

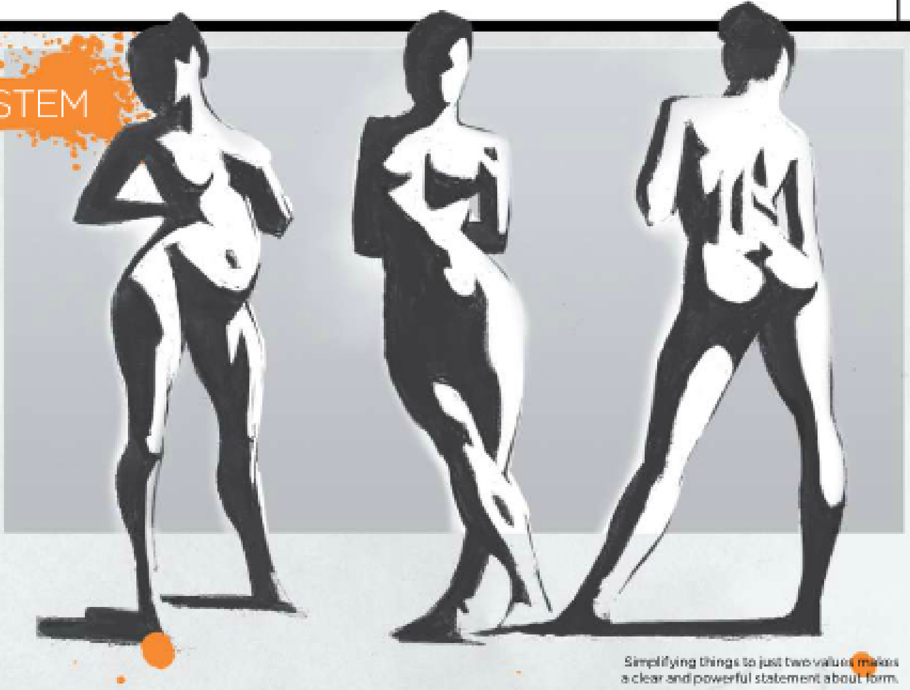
5. PLACEMENT IS THE KEY

Because it is impossible (and impractical) to render an infinite value range, I focus on how values relate to each other. For example, a #5, mid-value tone on the value scale can look really dark next to pure white. The same #5 grey can also look really bright surrounded by pure black. Knowing what values to use, and where to place them is how I create the illusion of a full value scale.

6. TWO-VALUE SYSTEM

Assigning one value for light and one value for shadow is the first value judgment I make. I often use the white of the paper as the value of the light shape and a medium tone as the value of the shadow shape. Simplifying things to only two values makes a clear and powerful statement that I always strive to maintain throughout the rendering process, even when adding more values. The key is to stay within the established value range.

“Edge describes how quickly the planes of a form turn away from the light”



Simplifying things to just two values makes a clear and powerful statement about form.

7. EDGES DEFINED

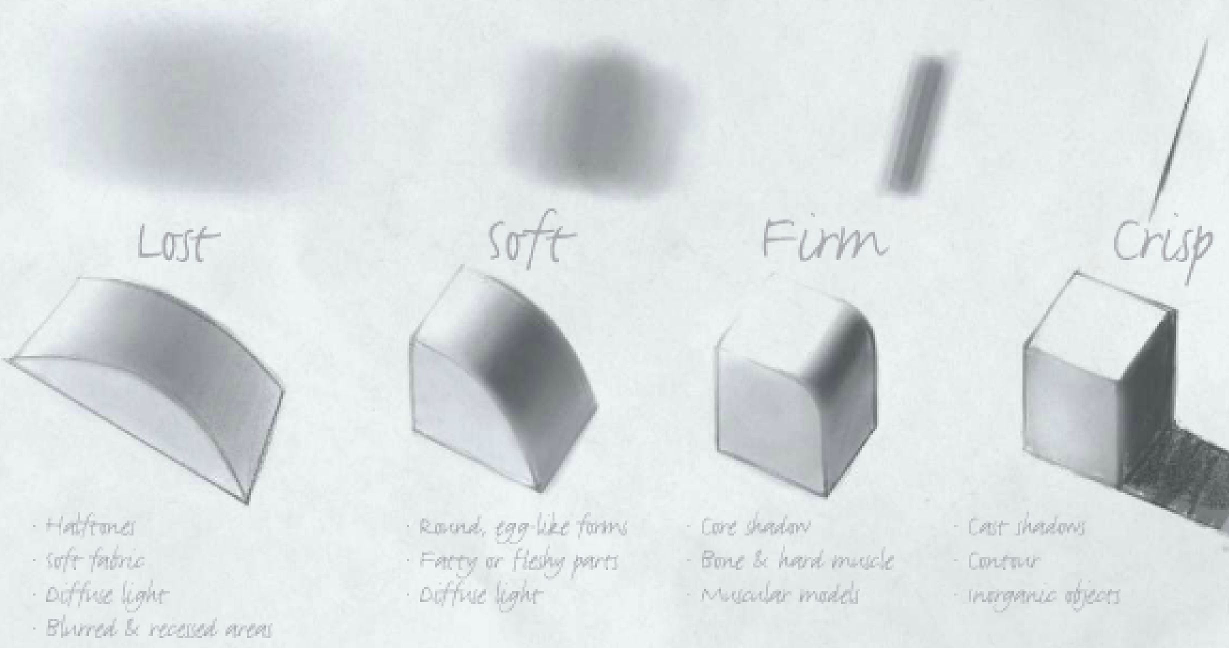
Edge describes how quickly the planes of a form turn away from the light, and is defined using a range from soft, to firm, to hard. The human form has multiple edges, especially in the joints. An object's surface material and the intensity of the light can also affect the quality of the edge. In the same way that I limit my values, I like to limit my edges as well and focus on good relationships.

8. SOFT EDGES

Soft edges (aka 'lost' edges) indicate a slow, gradual movement away from the light. Any round or egg-like form can be described perfectly with soft edges. For example, I like to use soft edges on round, fleshy parts of the body like the buttocks, the fat of the cheeks, or the meat of the thighs. Soft edges can also be used to blur an area to create the illusion of atmosphere and depth.

9. HARD EDGES

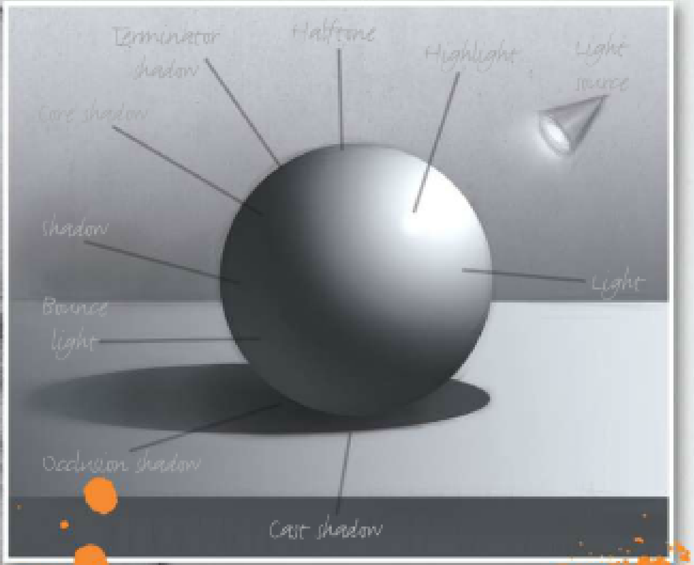
Hard edges (also known as 'crisp' or 'sharp' edges) indicate a rapid plane change. For example, the corner of a box or table can be described with a straight, hard edge. With the exception of cast shadows (see below), sharp edges generally don't exist in organic forms, so proceed with caution. I like to use hard edges for emphasis, or to add dramatic contrast to the shadow pattern.



10. USING FIRM EDGES

Firm edges lie somewhere between the extremes of soft and hard edges. Used properly, they can describe either rapid or gradual plane changes. Because of their versatility, I often start my rendering with firm edges and then adjust and refine accordingly by either softening or hardening depending on the form being modelled. I use firm edges mostly for core shadows (see below), especially when they fall on harder surfaces like bone or defined muscle.

“I use firm edges mostly for core shadows, especially when they fall on harder surfaces like bone or muscle”



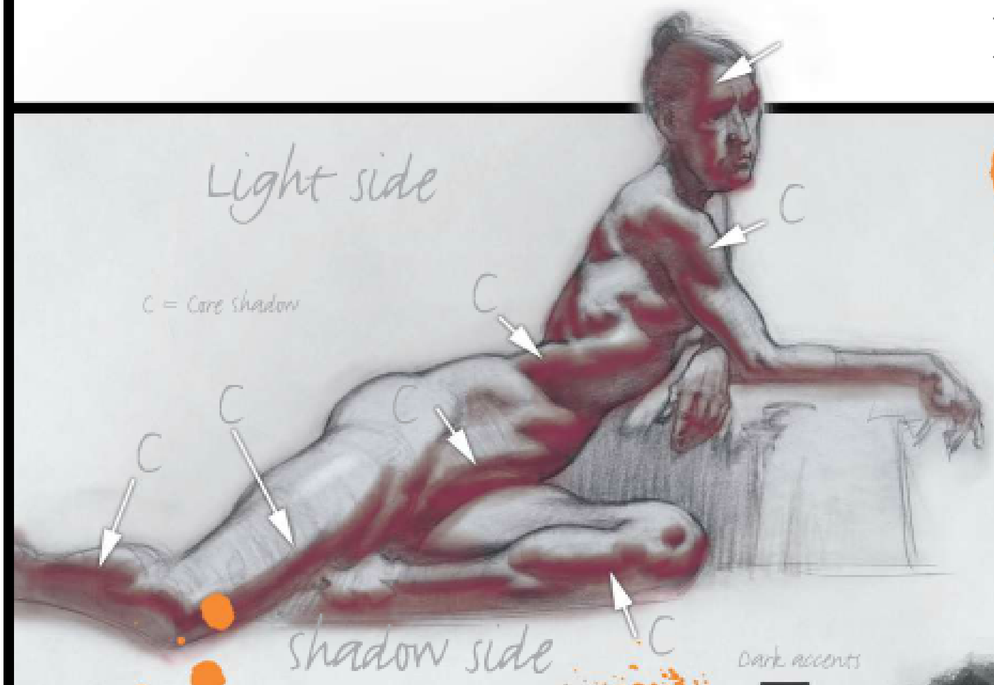
11. ANATOMY OF LIGHT AND SHADE

When light strikes an object, a varying range of tones is created that describes how light falls and transitions to shadow. These varying tones are often referred to as: highlight, light, halftone, terminator shadow, core shadow, reflected light (aka 'bounce light'), occlusion shadow and cast shadow. James Gurney referred to this as 'the form principle', because identifying and understanding how these tones relate is vital to rendering a form.

PRO SECRETS

Use gradients for transitions

Gradients are a quick way to indicate the movement of value and create a soft or lost edge. I use gradients to turn form from shadow into light or to transition light to the halftones. Gradients can be done in many ways: I like to use either the flat side of my charcoal pencil or stick and, using a zigzag motion, I carefully lighten the pressure to lighten the tone as I move into the light side of the forms.

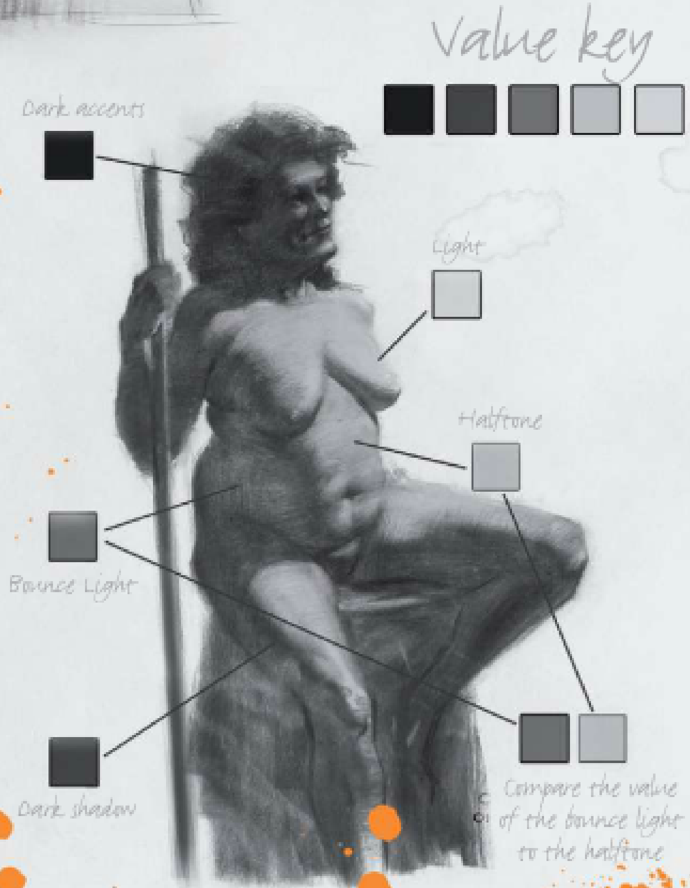


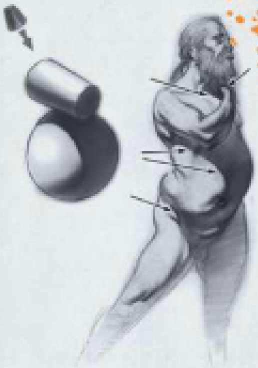
15. A NOTE ON BOUNCE LIGHT

Reflected light, or 'bounce light', is created when light bounces off nearby surfaces and back into the shadow. Because bounce light appears relatively bright compared with the shadow, a common mistake is to make it brighter than it is – which kills the illusion of light, shadow and form. I always use caution with bounce light to maintain the integrity of the value structure. When in doubt, keep it dark or leave it out.

12. THE CORE SHADOW

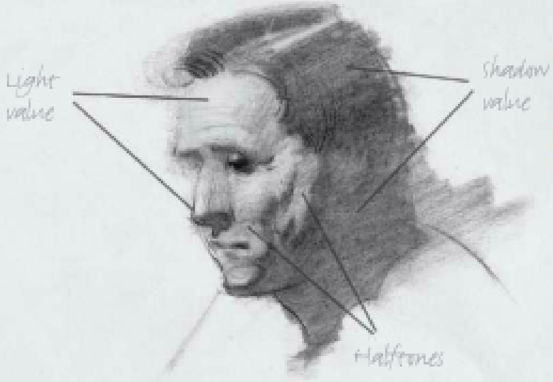
The core shadow lies at the border, or intersection, of light and shadow. Value-wise, the core tends to be much darker than the shadow because it is not affected by reflected light. I often begin the core with a firm edge and then soften as needed when transitioning to rounder, fleshier parts of anatomy. By simply darkening the core, I can quickly indicate reflected light and heighten the feeling of a three-dimensional form.





13. THE CAST SHADOW

A cast shadow is created when a form completely blocks direct light, which projects or casts a silhouette of shadow. As a general rule, hard, crisp edges are best for indicating cast shadows. The only exceptions are when light is diffused or is farther away. I like to use cast shadow as a design element. For example, I can intentionally curve the shadow cast by an arm over the torso to heighten the feeling of form and structure.



14. A NOTE ON HALFTONES

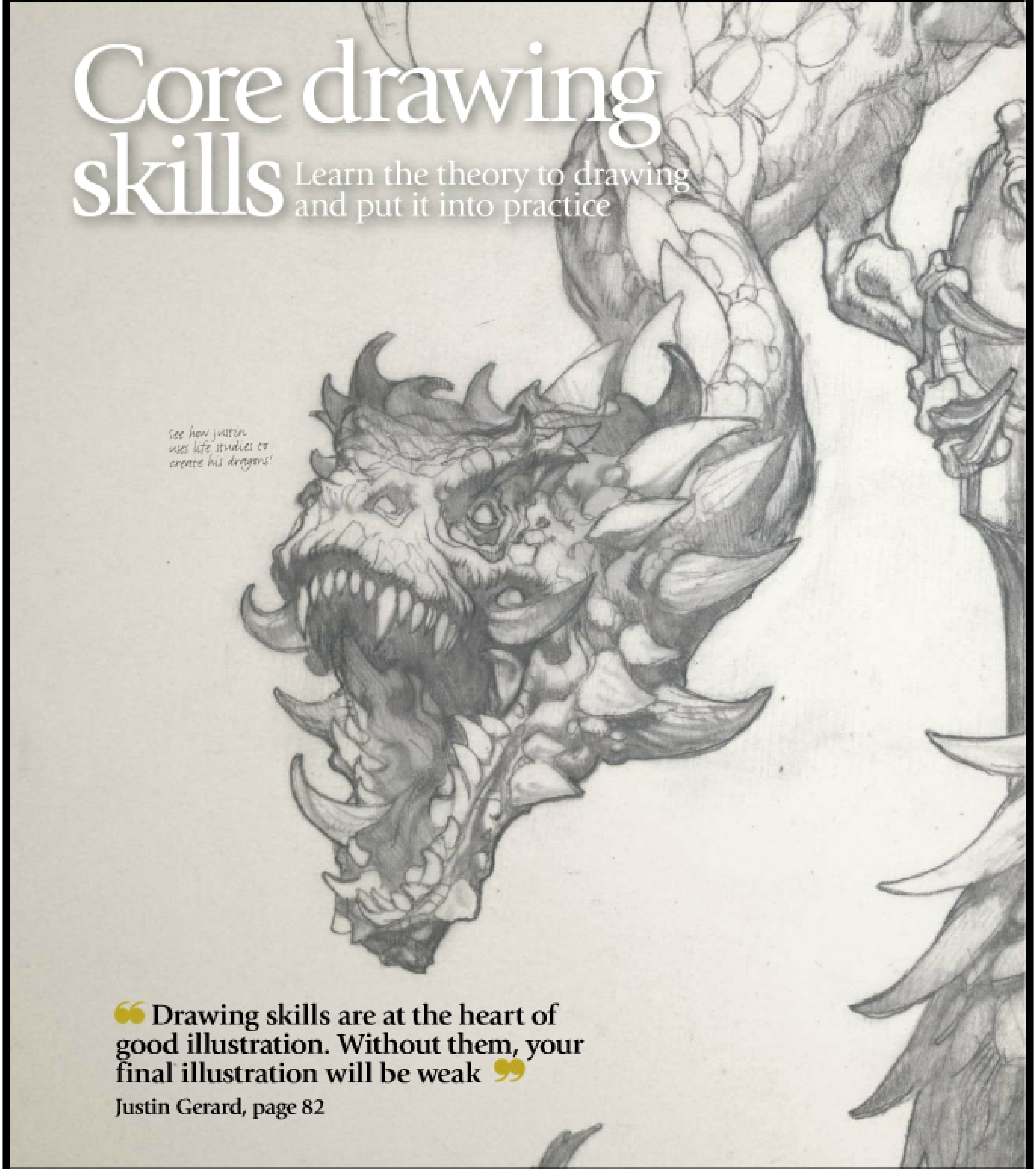
Halftones are between the value of the form in direct light and the value of the shadow, and indicate a light-facing plane that is slightly turned away from the light; it is within the values of the light, but a dark light. Because the difference between halftones and light values are so subtle, it takes a lot of skill, practice and good observation to render them well.

16. A NOTE ON HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights occur when two or more light-facing planes intersect. As core shadows indicate plane changes, so do highlights. If I get lost in the light side of a figure, I'll look for the highlights to help locate hidden anatomy or plane changes. Highlights can also move in relation to the viewer's eye, so I always use caution and care when placing them.

Core drawing skills

Learn the theory to drawing and put it into practice



“Drawing skills are at the heart of good illustration. Without them, your final illustration will be weak”

Justin Gerard, page 82

Justin Gerard

Freelance illustrator

Justin Gerard uses his traditional techniques to create stunning fantasy art. Behind his imaged creatures and characters are the core skills you'll learn to draw from life or from your imagination.

Discover Justin's methods for improving your drawing skills.
Turn to page 80

Workshops

Put drawing theory into practice

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Discover the theory behind perfect drawing from life and imagination.

82 The art of drawing: In practice
Put Justin's ideas to the test as he shows how to use drawing theory.

PART ONE

THE ART OF DRAWING THE THEORY

Neglect your traditional drawing skills at your peril! Master artist Justin Gerard reveals how they can improve your art

Artist PROFILE

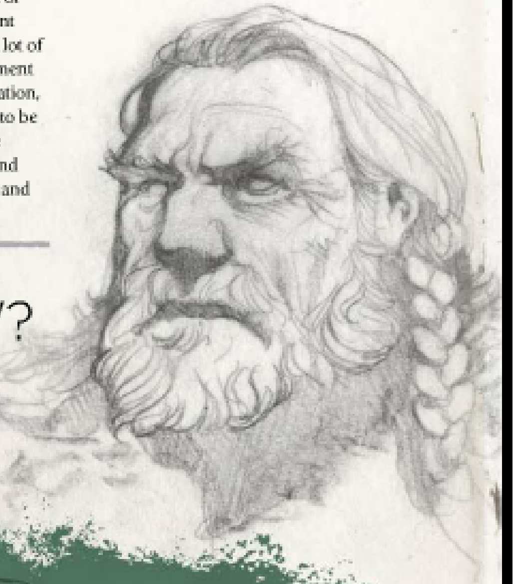
Justin Gerard
COUNTRY: US

Justin has travelled the world in search of the perfect medium to paint in. He's not found it, but along the way he's met some fascinating people, seen some interesting places and had a chance to paint a lot of great subjects. He enjoys good music, chocolate chip cookies and tank battles.
www.justingerard.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifz-theory

There are two sides to art: the emotional and the technical. They are both equally important, but here we're concerning ourselves with the technical aspect of art, which is objective and can be taught with precision to almost anyone. The emotional aspect is less scientific and better left to be discovered by the artist, rather than taught.

Drawing is the fundamental core of good illustration. Without competent drawing, an illustration may have a lot of heart but no brains. In the development of my particular approach to illustration, I've found the following two books to be of immense value: Bridgeman's Life Drawing by George B Bridgeman, and Drawing Course by Charles Bargue and Jean-Léon Gérôme.



WHAT SHOULD I DRAW?

What to draw will be determined mostly by what each artist is interested in, but whatever this may be, there are some things that every artist should be extremely familiar with drawing. The most important thing to know how to draw is the human form, and specifically the hands and face. The study of these elements is extremely important if you're planning on communicating with humans; if you're doing art for semi-aquatic reptilians then it may not be as necessary...

Studies from life

Drawing from life is like doing knuckle push-ups for your mind. As well as improving your hand-eye coordination, it also helps build a deeper understanding of how light and shadow fall across a solid form. Communicating the illusion of reality via a thorough understanding of light is essential for an artist

Building a visual vocabulary

When you draw from life you develop your visual vocabulary, made up of all the things you've ever drawn. As you draw a face, your mind remembers the lines and shapes. Later, as you draw from your imagination you'll find that you can recall these lines you've memorised. If you're an artist who enjoys drawing from their imagination then drawing from life is even more important, to ensure that the ideas you're communicating are grounded in reality.

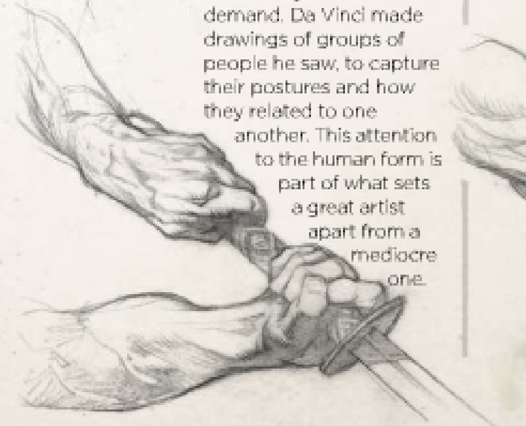
The importance of human faces

The human face is the most important study for the artist. The human brain dedicates a considerable amount of energy to recognising the patterns of muscles on other human faces, to interpret the deeper aspects of what people are saying and to gauge their responses. Because of this inherent study of faces, a face will always be the most interesting aspect of an image and will be the first place that most people look at. Therefore, knowing how to draw faces properly is paramount among the tools every artist needs.

> “Knowing how to draw faces properly is paramount among the tools every artist needs”

Mastering the human form

The human form is also an important study for the serious artist. Artists who can render it effectively have always been in demand. Da Vinci made drawings of groups of people he saw, to capture their postures and how they related to one another. This attention to the human form is part of what sets a great artist apart from a mediocre one.



Capturing the posture of a person is crucial to developing your drawing skills. If Da Vinci felt the need to continually draw people, so should you.

The importance of animal forms

Humans are all well and good, but sometimes you find yourself drawing things that aren't quite human. In a word, aliens. When doing this, it's still important to ground your work in reality: you want your ideas to be believable, or at least anatomically possible. One of the best ways to do this is to make studies from animals. By memorising the forms of animals from this planet, you'll be better equipped to draw those from other planets.

Committing to memory

One of the goals of drawing from life is to memorise the details and the general construction of your subjects, which then allows you to recall them later when creating your images. Your drawings don't need to be perfect photographic representations, but they shouldn't be caricatures either. When you're finished, you should come away with a better understanding of the construction of the forms and their details. You will then be able to communicate them with emotion, and not be hampered by a lack of technical skills.

HOW DO I DRAW?

There's no single correct way to draw. However, certain methods have been tested over time and have proved to be effective at producing good art. These methods aren't mysteries. They're readily available, and all you need is time, dedication and a few library late fees to master the technical aspects of drawing.

Imagine before you draw

Before you place your first line onto paper, try to see in your mind what the complete image is going to look like. You don't want to just haphazardly throw down lines at random. Then, when you do begin, start with very light lines to establish the shapes.

> "When drawing from life, try to remain true to what you're actually seeing"

Draw what you see in front of you

When drawing from life, try to remain true to what you're actually seeing. Later on you can go wild from your imagination, but your art will always be stronger if you have worked hard to be as faithful as possible to your subject matter in your studies. Remember that you want – and need – to ground your creations in reality.

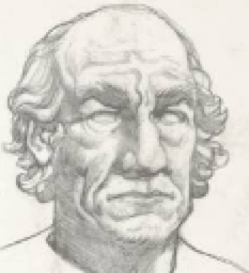
imagine the lines on the page, study the subject in front of you and then start drawing. It's that simple.

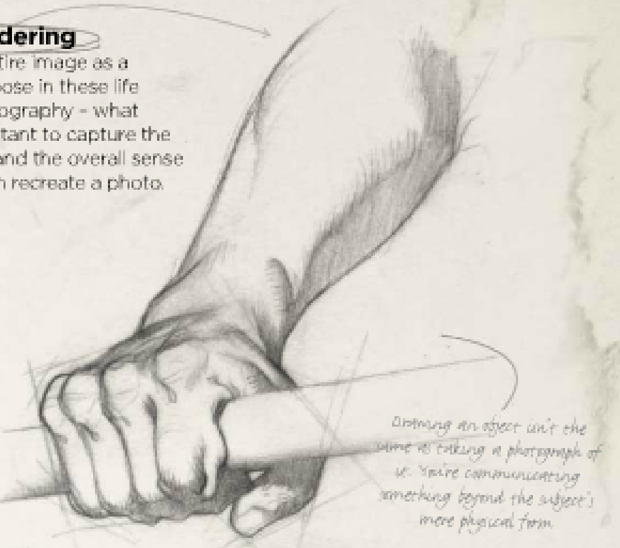
Why not just trace photographs?

Some artists trace photographs to achieve these ends. This is usually done in the interest of saving time. If you decide to go this route then you will derive some understanding of shape and detail. However, I think the final results are less interesting and have less personality than freehand drawings – tracing a photograph is never going to be as helpful in truly understanding the construction of the forms. The drawings where I've had to fight my way through are always the strongest and most visually interesting.

Knowing when to stop rendering

It's not necessary to render your entire image as a camera would. The illustrator's purpose in these life studies is not to compete with photography – what would be the point? It's more important to capture the idea of a thing, its shape and form, and the overall sense of its surface and details, rather than recreate a photo.





Refine an image from a previous study

As you work and rework to solve a difficult problem in an image, you may notice that your drawing becomes quite messy. There are many things artists do to solve this, but I prefer one of two courses of action. If the unnecessary lines are light, erase what's unnecessary and bulk up the lines that are the most important to minimise the stray lines. However, if the unnecessary lines have hopelessly overtaken the drawing, then transfer the drawing – either by vellum, serial graphite or light table. When retracing an image, simplify the shapes down to what is most essential. The goal is to create fewer, stronger lines as you refine your drawing.

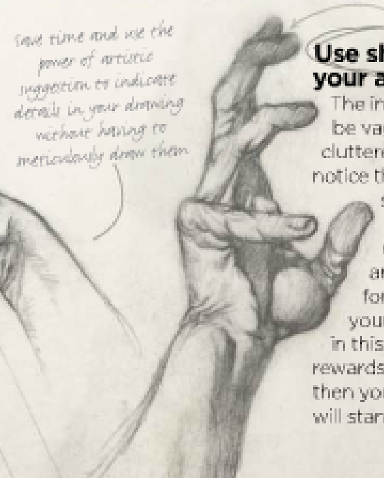
Rendering details

If everything is equally detailed an image becomes flat. The crocodile is covered in scales, but only some of these scales are necessary to communicate the feeling of its scaly hide to the viewer. The sharpest details in your drawing should be reserved for the focal areas; leave the details that are outside these areas as suggestions. The viewer's imagination, using what you've provided them in the detailed areas, will be able to fill in the gaps.

Simplifying shapes

Part of the illustration process is knowing what to leave out of your image. We only have so much time available, and choices have to be made on what details we add or leave out. One small shadow may be vitally important, while another may just be visually confusing. Simplifying your shapes will give an image more clarity.

> "The sharpest details in your drawing should be reserved for the focal areas, such as the eyes or hands"



Use shadows to your advantage

The inside of shadows should be vague and transparent, not cluttered and detailed. You'll notice that in a final image, the shadows always support the focal point: they recede so that the focal areas in the light can come forward. Learning to frame your key areas with shadows in this way brings great rewards. If you get this right, then your image's focal areas will stand out.

PART TWO

THE ART OF DRAWING IN PRACTICE

Justin Gerard reveals how drawing skills can be used on a practical basis, in the concluding part of his workshop series

Artist PROFILE

Justin Gerard
COUNTRY: US

Justin has travelled the world in search of the perfect medium to paint in. He's not found it, but along the way he's met some fascinating people, seen some interesting places and had a chance to paint a lot of great subjects. He enjoys good music, chocolate chip cookies and tank battles.
www.justingerard.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifx-practice

Now that we've discussed the theory of drawing in part one, let's talk about the practical side of things. How does drawing work in the grind of a real-life illustration job?

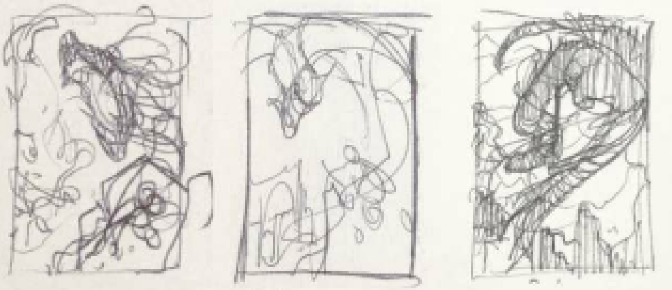
Drawing skills are at the heart of good illustration. Without them, your final illustration will be weak. Drawing provides the intellectual framework of an illustration, and is the primary means by which your ideas will be communicated. It also offers an excellent way of exploring an idea, and slowly refining it down to something truly beautiful, eliminating the errors and weaknesses, and maximising the impact of its strengths.

Picturing the idea

Before beginning your illustration, you have to know what it is you want to do. If you're working for a client then this may already be taken care of. Yet often even if you have been given a brief, how you'll show the idea is still a mystery locked inside your head, and we must find a way to bring it out. What's the mood of the scene? Who or what are its inhabitants? Where is the tension? Wander around in your imagination first. Explore the possibilities mentally.

While technical skill represents the scientific half of art, the idea is part of the emotional half of art – the side that's personal to you. It's this part that can't be taught scientifically. The technical aspects that we've discussed can be learned by anyone, given enough time and dedication. The ideas, though, are your own and they arise out of every experience you have ever had. So think hard on them before you begin.

Quick thumbnails enable you to visualise your ideas.



Produce thumbnails

Once you have your idea in mind and you have a sense of what you want to accomplish, try to capture it on paper in a thumbnail. Thumbnails enable you to try different approaches and compositions for your idea quickly, without the hassle of redrawing some vast, complicated layout dozens of times. The most important aims of the thumbnail are to nail down the composition and the arrangement of the elements. We must know where things lie in relation to one another before we can leave this stage.

Diving for ideas

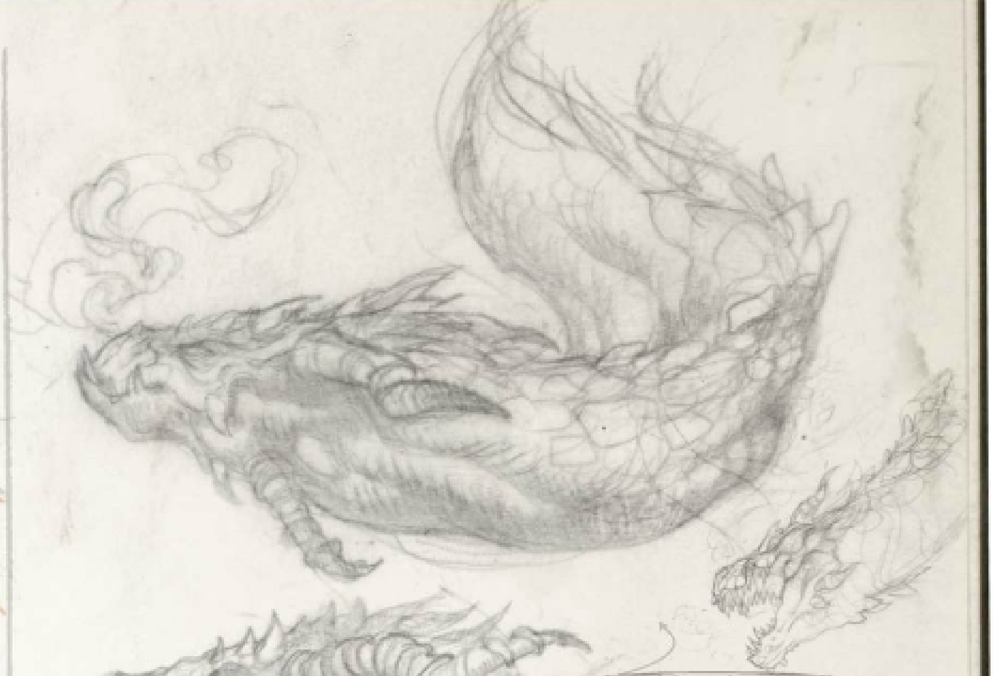
The aim here isn't necessarily to print out exactly what's in your head. The human mind isn't a desktop printer that can spew out what it sees on the monitor. There are layers of emotion, feeling and disconnected ideas that must be assembled in a logical format for us to meaningfully express them. The idea is there, and our purpose is to carve down through these layers to find it.

Refine thumbnail

After I've drawn a thumbnail that I like I'll redo it several times, working it slightly differently each time. I'll also begin to explore the expressions of my characters. I want to home in on the idea's signal in my brain, and to separate what should be there from what shouldn't. I now switch from ink to pencil so I can refine the work. I won't leave this stage until I have a clear representation on paper of what was originally in my mind.

First is often best

I never leave the thumbnailing stage until I have a composition that I'm excited about. Often I find that this turns out to be the very first thumbnail that I put down. However, even if you're very excited about your first thumbnail, put down a dozen or so others just to make sure that you have explored all the possibilities.



Once you're happy with the subject, start to tackle the details.

Sketching the details

After completing my thumbnails I move on to explorative sketching. In this phase I step away from any broader concerns over composition and arrangement, and instead try out ideas for what things might look like with some details. I'm still working purely from my imagination at this point, with no reference except what's in my head. I try out different positions and expressions to continue to carve down to the core of the idea that's hidden inside my brain.

> "The human mind isn't a printer that can spew out what it sees on the monitor"

Digital comp

Occasionally, I find it helpful to flesh out the barebones idea contained within the refined thumbnail. This happens mostly in complex scenes involving architecture and perspective. For most projects I prefer to do this digitally in Photoshop. I'll scan in my thumbnails and sketches, and then paint over them digitally, cutting and moving elements as necessary. I enjoy working digitally because it allows for a great deal of fast experimentation, and I can try out different ideas in far less time than it would take to redraw them several times by hand.

Photo reference

I try not to rely too heavily on photo reference. When I do, it begins to look too eerily perfect, and there's a dangerous line that's crossed where an image no longer looks like it's been drawn from imagination, but rather like the product of a camera. However, photo reference is indispensable for good illustration and it's important that you're familiar in detail with all of the elements you intend to illustrate. To do this, I prefer to draw and memorise the major elements of my reference so that I can recall the construction more naturally later on. Photo reference is at its best when it's serving as an inspiration; I gather a great deal of it for every project, I study it and then I put it away until the very end, where I'll bring it back out to make sure I haven't made some terrible mistake!

Studies from reference and from life

To help memorise forms and yet avoid having our images look too perfect, we do studies from our reference. As we discussed in part one, this helps give us a solid understanding of the construction of the elements we hope to communicate in our illustration. It also enables us to communicate them with a more natural feeling. It makes sense to do studies primarily on detail areas and focal points. Elements such as faces, hands, and objects or designs that'll have to withstand a certain amount of scrutiny are the most important areas to focus on.

A note about dragons

The idea of a dragon exists in everyone's mind, and there are examples in nature that people tend to associate with them. Anyone who's seen a crocodile being fed or watched a snake coiling to strike has a sense of what reptilian cunning in large form might look like. Our job as illustrators is to capture those elements in nature that other people can relate to and communicate them effectively.

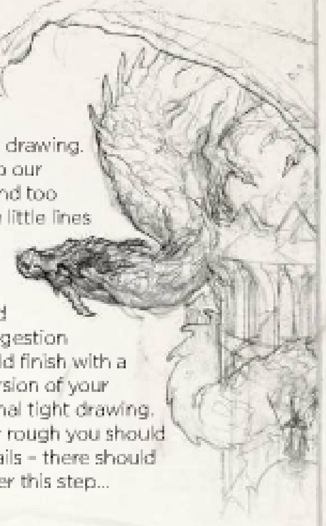
What is a crocodile but a dragon without wings and the ability to breathe fire!

Simply closing the dragons mouth tells a different story.

> Photo reference is at its best when it's serving as an inspiration

Experimentation

There are a thousand different directions you could take your illustration in, and each subtle change will make it tell a new story. This experimentation can be a source of procrastination – a way of putting off tackling the final drawing – but it's worth it in spite of the danger. It's good to try different ideas at this stage, where you're more engaged in the details and the nuances of expression on your characters. But keep an eye on your original thumbnails; find what it is about that original idea that you found so appealing, and try to play it out in these different ideas.



Rough drawing

Now's the time to transfer our comp and all our studies into the rough drawing. We're still carving down to our original idea, so don't spend too much time trying to refine little lines and shadows. Your rough should still look rough. Your main aim here is to nail down proportions and placement and give a suggestion of overall detail. You should finish with a more detailed, cleaner version of your comp, ready to do your final tight drawing. After having finished your rough you should only be altering small details – there should be no drastic changes after this step...

Drastic changes

...but sometimes disaster strikes! And this is exactly why we do a rough drawing, so that these moments of terrible disaster don't happen in the final painting. The rough reveals the problems in our composition and helps us to correct them. In this case I finished my rough drawing and realised that something was wrong; I had somehow drifted from my original idea. The dragon somehow lacked presence. He was looking off to the side, and for some reason this was pulling me down and out of the composition. After having done my studies, I knew what I would need to do to fix this.

The dragon needs to look towards the viewer, not out of the picture.

Tight drawing

Because the rough drawing is the trial run for the tight drawing, the tight drawing is the trial run for the final painting. By now, you'll be happy with the composition and the character's design. Now you're executing them all together and refining everything. Pay attention to details and to how the light is hitting everything. This tight drawing will be your blueprint for your final painting. When you move on to paint, you'll be able to come back to this illustration and use it to help you solve any problems that you may face.

Traditional to digital

Adapt your traditional skills to create stunning digital art

> I refer to anatomical landmarks, by which I mean the points where you can typically see the skeletal structure under the skin

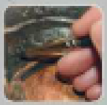
Nicole Cardiff, page 96

Nicole Cardiff
Illustrator Nicole Cardiff creates her digital paintings with the same approach as her traditional work. Read how she uses photo reference for better results and uses learned knowledge of figure drawing to create her imagined art.

See how Nicole goes from pencil and paint to digital software.
Turn to page 96

Workshops

Find a new approach to your art



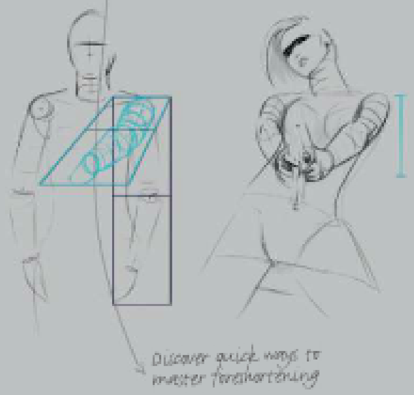
88 Mix traditional and digital art
Artist Dave Kendall shows how to move between art mediums.

94 Paint a faun using mixed media
Start a painting traditionally and finish in digitally with Justin Gerard.

96 Convey the feel of natural media
Achieve the look of traditional painting in Photoshop and Painter.

100 Learn the secret to painting skin
Achieve a flawless skin blend in Photoshop with Anne Pogoda.

104 Artist Q&A
Our team of artists share their quick tips to mixing traditional and digital art skills in your work.



Artist insight

MIX DIGITAL AND TRADITIONAL ART

Dave Kendall invites you to join him riding the tide of digital sitting on a raft of used paint tubes and brushes...

Artist **PROFILE**

Dave Kendall
COUNTRY: England

Dave is a familiar face to readers of ImagineFX. The Bristol-based artist began his career by illustrating book covers, and more recently has worked on trading cards and comics. He works in both traditional and digital media.
www.rustybaby.com

Traditional art can be daunting in the age of the digital canvas. It means getting your hands dirty and abandoning the undo key. This absence, however, can be the most liberating and enhancing thing for your art. Before starting a painting with traditional paints you must know how the colour scheme is going to work. Digital can enable you to neglect this, which is not always the best for any artist's development.

You'll find yourself floundering around in the Hue/Saturation swamp before you know it. Although I love working digitally I started off my art with traditional paints. For speed I mostly work with acrylics, but I will be trying out Artisan Water Mixable Oils for this article.

Setting up a professional digital artist suite can set you back thousands of pounds. To produce pro-standard traditional painting can be a considerably cheaper affair.

Part One: Getting ready

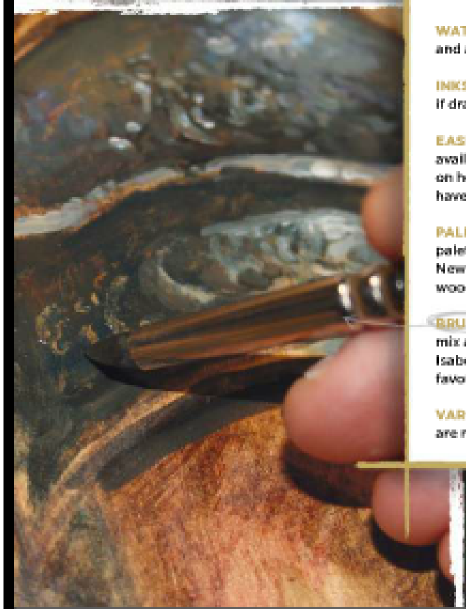
Preparation of a workspace is particularly important where paint is concerned. I will give a few tips to make your workspace and by extension your work comfortable and rewarding.

1 COMFORTABLE SPACE

If like me you never liked being told to tidy your room, it's best to find a space which doesn't need to be cleared up after you've finished a painting session. A corner of your room can work, or if blessed with plenty of room a dedicated studio space. It's also essential that the area is well-lit. If you can find a North facing window, that would be ideal. But comfort is essential.

2 PAINTING PLACE

Artists through the ages have painted on every surface and at all angles. I'll stick within 90 degrees for this introduction. I have an A0 draughtsman table, a table easel and a large, free-standing easel for my bigger paintings. You need to be able to see and have access to the whole surface of a painting. While the table and table top easel accommodate smaller illustrations, the large easel can carry paintings up to four or five feet.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

PENCILS Wooden and mechanical. Staedtler and Pentel.

ERASERS Malleable putty useful for removing graphite from most surfaces.

PENS I love the Faber-Castell art pens for line and wash.

PAPER AND HARD-BACK SKETCHBOOKS Rowney, Winsor & Newton, and Moleskine.

WATERCOLOUR PAPER I use Langton satin-smooth hot pressed for most of my work. Although any smooth watercolour paper can be used.

MASONITE Easily purchased and cut to size available from timber or hardware merchants.

CANVAS Can be bought ready or custom made from most art shops. With time and experience you will be able to create your own.

MAHL STICK I made mine myself. All that's needed is a firm piece of rounded dowling and a soft cushioned end.

ACRYLICS Liquitex and Finity from Winsor and Newton are the makes I use the most.

OILS Wide range from traditional oils to fast drying (griffin alkyd) and water mixable (Artisan).

WATERCOLOUR They come in tubes and as dry cake versions.

INKS Brilliant colour. Useful for glazing if dramatic colour is needed.

EASELS There are many types available; your choice should be based on how much room and money you have to spend.

PALETTES Tiles, plates, stay wet palettes for acrylic from Winsor & Newton and Daler-Rowney, traditional wooden palettes for oils.

BRUSHES Sceptre-gold synthetic/sable mix and Pro Arte for acrylic and oils. Isabey watercolour brushes are my favourite watercolour tools.

VARNISHES Gloss and matte. Liquitex are my favourite for acrylic.

> "Getting your hands dirty and abandoning the undo key can be the most liberating and enhancing thing for your art"

3 BRIGHT LIGHTS

I use an angle poise for most of my work. It doesn't matter how you get light on your work as long as it's good and strong. I always work with a **blue-coated daylight bulb**. Try using a normal bulb after using one and you will see how yellow the light is. Not only does it give you accurate colour, but it's also less tiring on your eyes. Once again, comfort comes into play.

4 INSPIRATION IS KEY

This comes in the form of books and DVDs. I've been buying books from a very early age so my collection is pretty large. If I am feeling down or lacking in energy the images around me have never failed to pull me out of my slump.

5 STORAGE

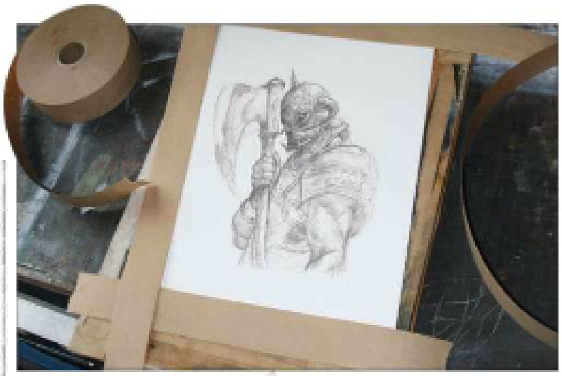
You'll need somewhere to put your raw materials and finished paintings – safer than the floor. If you have room for a planning chest try to pick one up, though they are sought after so you may struggle. Make sure you protect your materials any way you can. A sturdy portfolio is always going to be useful as you'll need to transport the paintings around.

Part Two: Choosing the correct materials

I'll cover what's needed to start you painting. Materials and their uses could fill books, but this is intended as an appetiser.

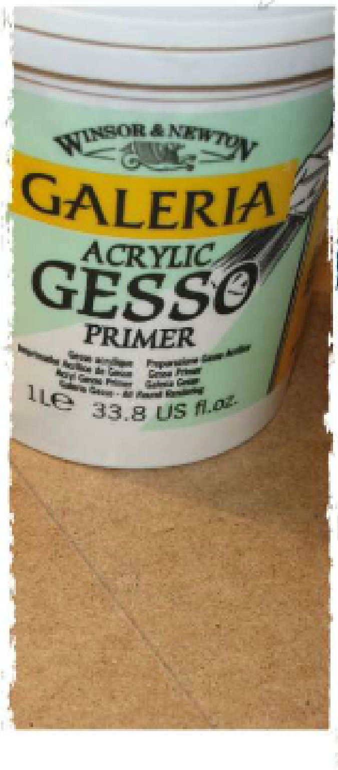
1 SKETCHING PENCILS

Ever since seeing Robert Crumb's beautiful sketchbooks I decided to try to apply similar values to my own sketching process. I work in hardbound books containing heavy cartridge paper. They will take pretty rough treatment from most media. When they're finished they get numbered and put on a shelf, which I use often as visual diaries. I have a personal preference for 2B pencils. I use mechanical and good old fashioned wooden versions.



2 CANVAS AND BOARD

This is one area where I apply a do-it-yourself philosophy. I get masonite board cut to size at a local timber merchants. Using artist acrylic gesso I coat the board evenly with a ordinary house brush, allow it to dry and then apply another coat in an opposite direction. Between coats I use wet and dry paper, which can be bought from any car accessory shop. This can give a very smooth surface to work on. It's very sturdy, forgiving, yet economical.



3 PAPER

Another surface I use to paint on is hot pressed watercolour paper. I stretch it by soaking it in a bath of water and then stick it to a sturdy board using gummed sealing tape. Once dry I coat it in a layer of Liquitex matte medium. This seals the paper to prevent the paint soaking into it and becoming dull. Can be used for oils or acrylics.

> "I find it's a false economy to buy cheap paints, though student-quality paints are okay if you are experimenting"

4 PAINTS AND MEDIUMS

I like to use good quality paints, such as **Liquitex and Finity acrylics**. They have a high pigment yield and therefore the colour is more intense. I find it's a false economy to buy cheap paints. If you are **experimenting** it doesn't hurt to go for student-quality paints, though.

5 PALETTES

Palettes could be any smooth cleanable surface: plates, glass, the traditional wooden or the disposable paper versions. For acrylics I do use a stay wet palette, which keeps the paint workable. Acrylics dry to a plastic film very quickly without it. The paint can be a little liquefied using it so impasto can be difficult. Oils are different. They remain workable for days without any extra help.

6 BRUSHES

I always use good quality brushes. Although expensive they will serve you and your painting well with a little TLC. They keep their shape and ability to apply paint for longer than cheaper varieties. This is probably the most important purchase you'll make. For a comparison, think of the difference between graphics tablets. I use a selection of synthetic, bristle and sable. I suggest having different sets of brushes for each medium.

7 PALETTE KNIVES AND COLOUR SHAPERS

Other useful mark-making tools are palette knives and rubber tipped colour shapers. These tools apply paint in a totally different way. They enable you to place slabs of colour, and to pull grooves, and texture your paint. Imagine painting bark and rough surfaces using these devices. Palette knives come into their own with larger paintings on board. You need a sturdy support for this.

8 CLEANING MATERIALS

Good quality brushes and paints should provide you with plenty of good service. However it's vital that you clean your equipment, especially brushes, if you are using oils and acrylics. Using normal hardware store brush cleaner should save brushes that have dried dirty. Old and damaged brushes are always useful for rough work such as scumbling.

9 COLOURS

Most makes of paint have a huge range of colours, though over time you will develop a smaller range you'll use more than most. This is down to personal taste to a certain extent. For instance I particularly like the **phthalo blues**. As you become more experienced you'll find that you'll be able to get a wide range of mix from just a few **core colours**.

10 VARNISHES AND PROTECTION

Although not strictly vital, varnishes fulfil an important last stage. When your painting is dry you'll find that the surface has different textures such as gloss and matte and colour intensities because of this. Varnish equalises and protects the surface. Gloss uniformly intensifies the colour while matte prevents reflections and is useful if you wish to photograph or scan the painting.

Part Three: Hints and tips

Here I'll give you a few pointers and tips when painting. Think of this as an introduction rather than an in-depth treatise. In celebration of Frank Frazetta's 80th birthday, I decided to take the opportunity to produce a Death Dealer sketch. It's quite a simple composition that enables me to experiment with a new media.

1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Experimenting with as many different techniques and media as possible is the only way to learn. Mistakes and accidents will happen but you'll learn lots from them. Working with watercolour will give an entirely different feel to acrylics or oils. Choose your media to suit your subject matter. This is the first time I have used Artisan Water Mixable Oils. I found them to be rather nice to work with, and I'll definitely be experimenting with them further. You have the advantages of oils but without the need for spirits and solvents. They have buttery and smooth consistency, with the extended drying time of oils.

2 FOUNDATION WORK

I never work from white when using oils or acrylics. Create an underpainting establishing shadows and values with burnt umber or a mix of burnt sienna and phthalo blues. Acrylics are probably the best paint to use at this stage as they are quick-drying and permanent. You can use almost any media on top of acrylic, but not oils. Work your paint up from thin to thick, especially when using slow drying paints. It will be impossible to work on top of heavy, wet paint. In the same way, work up to highlights adding the brightest and usually heavier paint at the end. Keep a roll of kitchen towel to hand. It's useful to clean brushes and to take excess paint off the surface if a mistake is made. »

3 BRUSH TYPES

Brushes come in a number of shapes and with different fibre types. Combinations of these will give very different results. The key is to try all of them as you paint. The most versatile of these are the synthetic/sable mix. These brushes can be used with most of the different paint types. Brushes come in flat and round types and it pays to have a selection of both. I work with a range of brushes. For most of the early work I find myself using larger flatter and broader brushes. A filbert is a good general brush for blocking in form and paint. It has a dual nature combining the aspects of flat and round brushes so can cover detail as well as larger areas. I find myself using smaller brushes only at the end of the painting process.

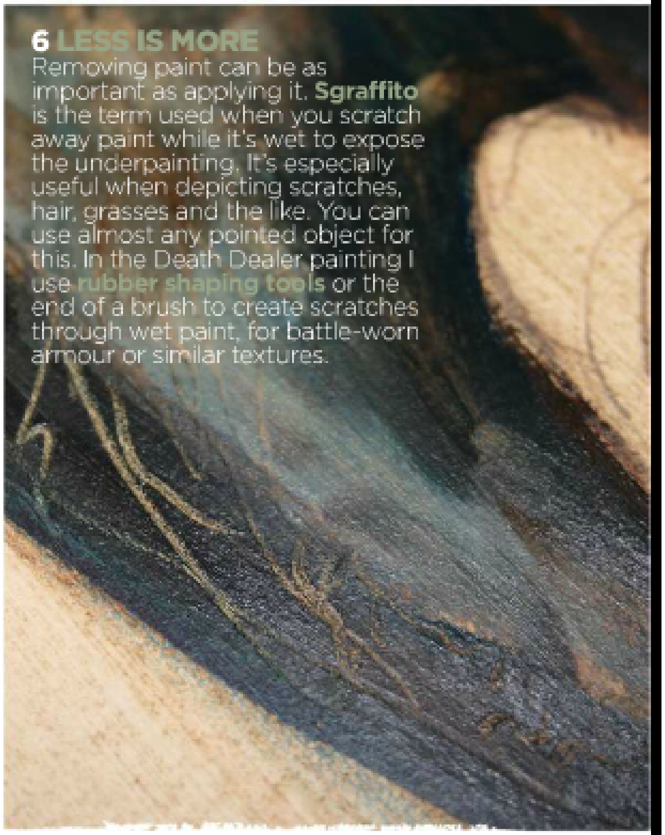
> A filbert is a good general brush for blocking in form and paint. It has a dual nature and can

4 TEXTURE

Have a dry flat brush that you can use to blend and create smooth transitions. I do tend to like lots of texture and like to see brush marks in my own work. Almost anything can be used to add texture to your paint. There are ready-made texture media available, but I have seen items such as egg shell and sand used to add interest to a painting. Use an old toothbrush to spatter your image with paint. This can be remarkably effective at suggesting noise and grain.

5 DRY BRUSH

This is a method of applying colour I use that only partially covers a previously dried layer. You should use very little paint on the brush and apply it with very quick, directional strokes. This method tends to work best when applying light paint over dark areas/dried paint and is useful in depicting rock and grass textures.



6 LESS IS MORE

Removing paint can be as important as applying it. **Sgraffito** is the term used when you scratch away paint while it's wet to expose the underpainting. It's especially useful when depicting scratches, hair, grasses and the like. You can use almost any pointed object for this. In the Death Dealer painting I use **rubber shaping tools** or the end of a brush to create scratches through wet paint, for battle-worn armour or similar textures.

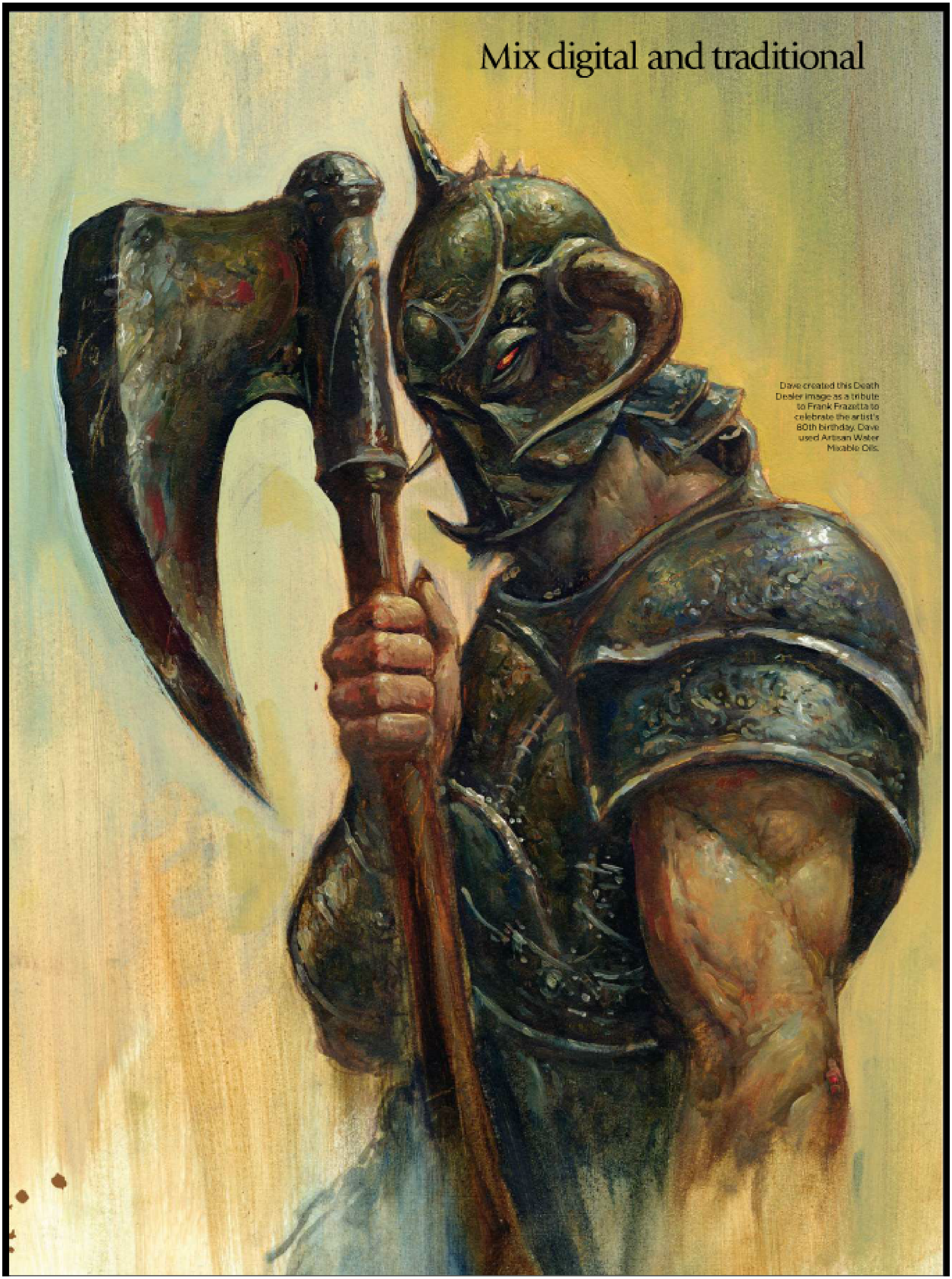
A valuable tool for traditional artists, an old toothbrush is handy for spattering your image with paint.

7 GLAZING

The process of laying a coat of transparent paint over a dry part of the painting. Used for intensifying shadows and modulating colour. A light transparent blue over dry yellow will of course create green. Use successive glazes repeatedly.

8 PAINTING MEDIUMS

Mediums are fluids that can be added to paint to modulate their consistency, drying time and texture. In the case of acrylics you get different mediums that make the paint matte or gloss. However my greatest use of matte medium is sealing paper and board, so paint doesn't soak into it.



Dave created this Death Dealer image as a tribute to Frank Frazetta to celebrate the artist's 80th birthday. Dave used Artisan Water Mixable Oils.

Oils & Photoshop

PAINT A FAUN USING MIXED MEDIA

Justin Gerard combines oils with Photoshop and produces a compelling and traditional, mythic wood-dweller

I've always enjoyed the idea of fauns. They're creatures that in some mythologies are lighthearted, at one with the countryside, and unsophisticated.

This image was originally commissioned as an erudite, learned faun. I came up with several ideas for what this might look like, and as I was drawing, I found myself straying into something that looked too much like a misshapen wizard with horns. It might be a cool idea on its own, but it wasn't what I was after.

So I drew a tiny thumbnail sketch of a classical faun as a kind of anchor-point for myself. It was this sketch that the ImagineFX team decided on. It was exciting because it gave me a chance to work with natural forms, such as mossy roots, mushrooms and gnarled horns. It also offered a lot of lighting challenges.

Artist **PROFILE**

Justin Gerard

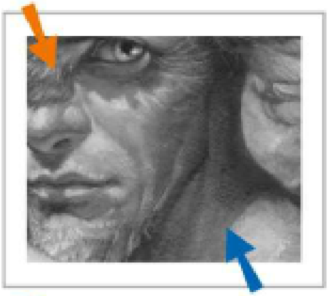
COUNTRY: US

Justin has travelled the world in search of the perfect medium to paint in. He hasn't found it, but he's met fascinating people, seen interesting places and painted great things.
www.justingerard.com

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifz-mixmedia

I drew the image at full size, adding details at this stage rather than later on. Doing this ensures that the underpainting stage will hopefully be as painless as possible. Then, in Photoshop, I added some digital magic.

In every piece I create I want to find – and overcome – a new artistic obstacle. This helps me produce a compelling image and teaches me something new along the way as well.



1 Technical lighting

I wanted this scene to have a great deal of light that would bounce around the subject and create warm shadows through diffuse reflection. From the beginning, I established the angle and direction of the sunlight so that the shadows would be consistent (shown by the red arrow). But the direct light isn't the only light source. There's ambient light from all the small patches of sunlight in the forest around this creature too. Furthermore, there's the reflected light (shown by the blue arrow), which will bounce back up from surfaces and project diffuse light. This can all become rather confusing, so keeping a consistent rule is really important when trying to produce a successful image.

2 Reference material

I collect a great deal of references before starting work. Most are from my photos, which provide details that I might otherwise overlook, and act as placecards for memories. They enable me to journey back to when the photo was taken and immerse myself in the environment. I may not look at the actual references I gather before starting a piece more than once, but the process of collecting it helps. It's nice to know it's there if I need it and that I won't have to break concentration to find something the scene needs.

3 Paint textures

The underpainting is in alkyd oil paints, which have a synthetic binder, so they dry very quickly. With alkyds, you can achieve strong textures in your underpainting to help your final image look more natural. When painting digitally over this texture, avoid using too many opaque layers except in focal areas such as faces. In the background, this texture tells the eye that there are convincing details there, without detracting from the focal points.

How I handle...

LIGHT AND COLOUR

1 Toning

I scan the image into Photoshop and adjust it until it looks like it did on my easel. I warm it up with Soft Light layers and Color Balance adjustment. The scene is in the day, and our figure's spotlit by sunlight coming through the canopy. I ensure I get the atmosphere right at this point – other colours will be affected by it later. Then I intensify some of the pools of light with a Color Dodge layer.

2 Colour

As I colour the image, I work in different types of layers. In general, I begin with several Color layers on low opacity. Because I've already warmed the piece, I'm more interested in the cooler tones and knocking back areas that shouldn't be so warm. After I have a sense of how warm or cool the colours of the piece will be, I use Multiply layers or Soft Light layers to increase the intensity of the colours.

3 Adjusting

It's time to add hard light slowly. The Hard Light layer set can pump up the colours in an area fast. But use it sparingly – it can give the painting a harsh, nuclear fallout look, and all areas will seem equally intense. This flattens the image and kills atmospheric perspective. I then use Normal layers to refine areas where texture is too strong and to pull back overpowering tones.

Painter & Photoshop

CONVEY THE FEEL OF NATURAL MEDIA

Do you strive to give your fantasy art an illustrative look? Then look no further, as **Nicole Cardiff** uses her traditional skills to paint a cloaked hero

In this workshop I'll describe the painting process that I use for all of my professional projects. I scan in a pencil drawing and import it into Photoshop. I then use a mix of Painter and Photoshop – Photoshop for most of the initial block-in and early work, plus some final tweaks, and Painter for most of the later blending and detailing work. I also shoot photographic references of fabric and the main character's pose.

The process is similar to what I'd do if I were painting traditionally. It starts with a sketch, then I lay in a sepia tone to use as a ground (the base colour you tone the canvas with) and then block in my colours. I use Painter IX and Photoshop CS 4, but you could get similar results with most versions of both programs. I recommend using a Wacom tablet for digital painting like this. I have a Graphire from many versions ago, but you can use whatever tablet you have at home.

Artist **PROFILE**

Nicole Cardiff
COUNTRY: US

Nicole received her BFA in Illustration from the Savannah College of Art and Design in 2005 and has been freelancing since then, working on game ads and marketing.
www.bit.ly/6HrLFq

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
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I also refer to anatomical landmarks, by which I mean the points where you can typically see the skeletal structure under the skin – cheekbones, collarbones and so on. I also generally recommend that people be somewhat familiar with hard and soft edges as a general concept; typically, I'll have the hardest edges on the forms that are in light, and the softest on forms that are in shadow. This replicates the way that the eye perceives form.

1 Sketch

I sketch a set of thumbnails, clean them up a bit in Painter with the Thick and Thin Pen tool and then choose one. I do a sketch with an HB pencil and paper and scan it in at 300 DPI. After a bit of Levels tweaking to get the white of the paper looking really white and setting the sketch as a Multiply layer in Photoshop, I'm ready to start painting.

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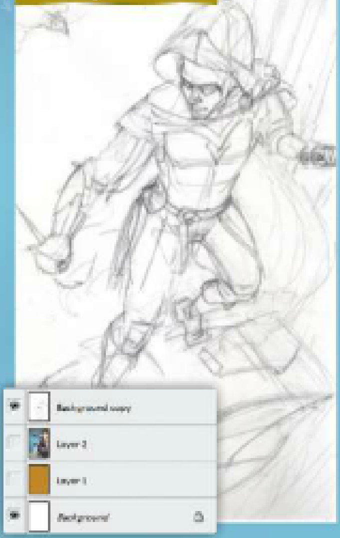
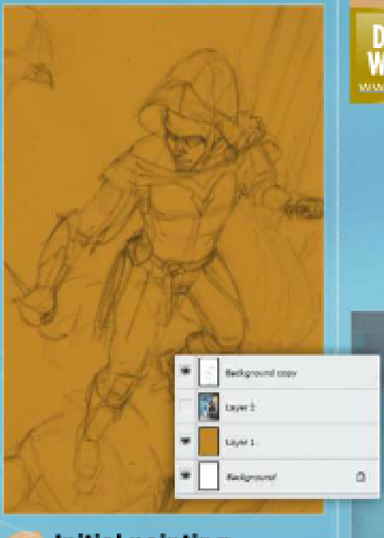


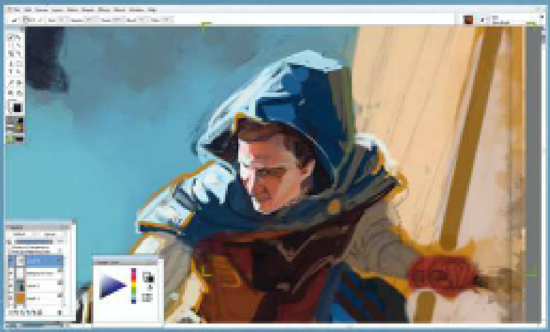


2 Initial painting

I set a brown, sepia tone on a layer beneath my sketch. I find that working on a warm ground with a middle value yields useful results for me. Cool colours look good over it, and it's much easier to maintain good contrasts if you start with something to break up the white. All of my initial block-in is done with a hard round brush in Photoshop. I generally do a few quick colour studies for various times of day and lighting situations to find the best solution.

3 Start form rendering

I'm careful while doing this initial block-in to keep a clear value distinction between areas of light and areas of shadow. This will keep the painting from becoming muddy later on as I add detail. I also photograph some references to keep my lighting reasonably accurate to how it wraps around forms. I strongly recommend getting a photo light for doing this, because it's been one of my best artistic investments.



4 Switch to Painter

I'm fond of blocking in at this level with Painter's Marker brush, so I zoom in and start working on the anatomy here. It's important to spend time getting the focal point of the composition right, so I work for a while on getting the anatomy of the figure the way I want it. I also generally lean towards exaggerating the light a bit and using a sketchy touch to mark anatomical landmarks, so that the bone structure is in place.

Shortcuts

Change brush size quickly

[and] (PC & Mac)

A quick way of getting a larger or smaller version of the Photoshop brush in use.

5 Emphasise the shadows

I simplify my values a little bit by moving the midpoint of the Levels in an Adjustment layer to .94. I find that doing this early on tends to keep my shadow areas distinct from the areas in the light. I also add a new layer set to Overlay with a flat medium-blue fill, which introduces a bit more of a mood to the lighting.

6 Finalise the composition

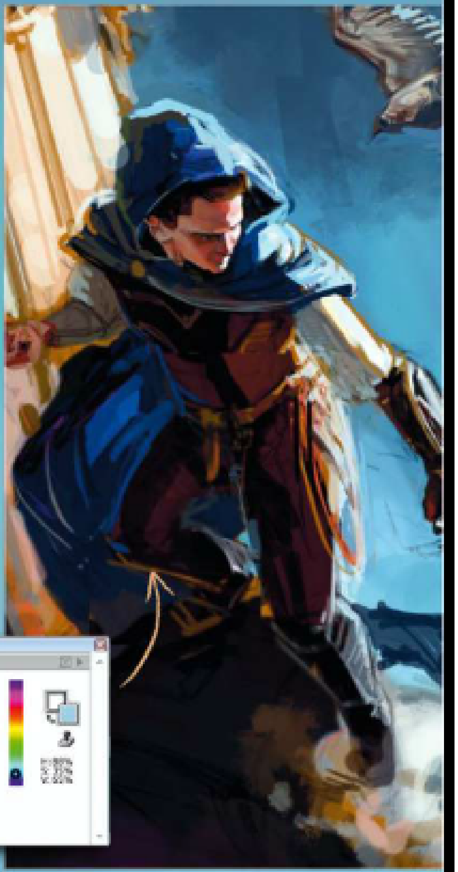
This is where I make decisions about how the smaller pieces of the composition should fit together. I generally flip the piece horizontally a few times while checking the overall value structure and repositioning pieces, such as the bird. Flipping the piece is an easy way to see it with new eyes.

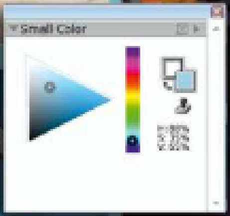
7 Blend in Painter

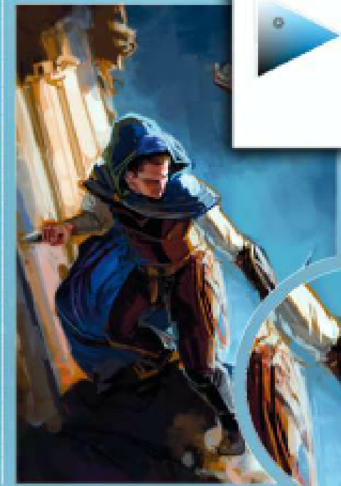
I blend in Painter with Don Seegmiller's Blender brush – which I got with his book Digital Character Design and Painting – and generally soften areas in shadow, areas that are behind other objects and less-important areas. The goal is to get a balance of soft and hard edges, although few of my edges are completely soft, since I paint in a fairly opaque style.

8 Detail the fabric

I usually twist an old sheet into an approximation of what the fabric's doing in any given piece and take some reference photos before I start detailing the fabric too much. This way, I can use the folds of the real fabric (in simplified form) to add authenticity to what I'm painting – in this case, the shadowy cloak. I'm also adding colours other than blue into the fabric, because large areas of similar colour and value usually benefit by having little touches of complementary colours added to them.







9 Blend and detail

I take the piece back into Painter and blend away any areas that look overly sketchy. In general, I'm aiming to have the most detail in the area just before the core shadow, as the form turns away from the light. I blend and detail areas such as the hands and gauntlet at this

Shortcuts
Draw a straight line in Photoshop
Shift (PC & Mac)
Hold down Shift while clicking on your desired start and end points.

10 Anatomy checks

This is the point where I spend a lot of time checking my references and further refining the anatomy. Still working in Painter, I concentrate on my character's face using a mixture of Don's Blender and the Round Camelhair in Oils at 54 per cent Opacity, taking several passes to check that the features wrap correctly around the form of the skull.

11 Architecture

I bring the piece back into Photoshop to do the hard architecture detailing. I use the Shift key to make sure I'm getting straight lines, and go to town cleaning up the columns and adding detail. I keep patches of non-local colours with similar values on the background areas of the painting at this stage; they add to the overall traditional effect.

12 Flip and check

I continue flipping the piece horizontally to check the anatomy of my character. I work on the bird in Painter to get it more finalised, refining the feathers and anatomy, and also tweak the architecture in Photoshop. This is the midway point for me – from here, it's pretty much all detailing.

PRO SECRETS

Refer to the Navigator

I get a lot of mileage from keeping the Navigator window open in Photoshop. If you occasionally look at the thumbnail view of your piece in the early stages while working, you're much more likely to end up with a piece that has good composition and value contrasts.

13 Focus on the focal point

Here I add more detail to the character's face, returning to the main focal point at this late stage to ensure that it remains the key element of the piece. I always make sure to touch the focal point at the beginning and at the end of a piece. That way, I can make sure that the rest of the painting is subservient to it.

14 More facial work

There still isn't quite enough detail around the character's face, so I add a subtle pattern into the edge of the cloak hood with a custom brush I've made in Photoshop, then painted over it in Painter to integrate the pattern. I also print the piece to check if there are any areas still in need of blending or more detail.

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: CLOUD/BACKGROUND

This is great for adding texture to a background, as it adds atmospheric haze while avoiding that airbrushed look.

CUSTOM BRUSH: SPONGE

Ideal for adding texture. Here I used it on the columns and the outfit.

15 Last details

I revisit the bird's anatomy because the front wing looks wrong. Even if I have a reference of something in the pose I've painted, sometimes it'll look odd or incorrect and need adjusting. I detail the last bits of his gauntlet, do the final bits of architecture detailing, and tweak the Levels and up the Saturation slightly in Adjustment layers.

Photoshop

LEARN THE SECRET TO PAINTING SKIN

Do your fantasy characters suffer from bad skin? Then it's a good job **Anne Pogoda** is on hand to remedy this unfortunate situation…

Artist **PROFILE**

Anne Pogoda

COUNTRY: Germany

Anne works for the German television and gaming industry and is also a lecturer at an art academy. After over 30 published workshops, she has produced two books (as author and contributing editor) with Ballistic Publishing.

www.darktownart.de

DIRECT LINK FOR WORKSHOP FILES
www.bit.ly/ifz-paintskin

With this workshop I'm going to show you my working technique for painting soft skin. All we need are two standard brushes, one texture brush and one filter from Photoshop – we'll be airbrushing most of the time.

My experience in television has taught me that the good thing about starting in black and white is that you don't become distracted by vibrant or badly placed colours. I also learned that the colours you apply later look much more natural when you add them halfway through your painting and continue working with them. This way you can avoid the metallic shine present in many black and white paintings that are coloured in at a late stage. I usually start with a simple sketch on a dark background. Because the eye focuses on bright areas first, this method makes the canvas work for me.

What's important about skin is not so much the texture itself, but the use of colours. Skin can have many different and interesting colours, depending on the surrounding light. I like working with cold and warm contrasts. So, for example, I love to mix yellows and blues together because this makes the skin look more interesting. But usually, before I start mixing the colours, I try out basic colour schemes to gain a better idea of what the figure may look like. This also helps me to see if the colour scheme I've thought of is, in fact, the best fit for the figure.

1 Basic sketch

I start off with two layers. One is my dark background layer, while on the second layer I make a rough sketch using one of the standard brushes. Brush number five and number six in Photoshop CS5 are the hard and soft brushes I prefer (in version CS4 and earlier they are called airbrushes). Here I usually work with the second group of airbrushes, using the 19 Rough and 300 Soft.

2 First shapes

I begin by blocking in rough shapes with a soft airbrush at around 30 per cent opacity. My dark canvas helps me to see the forms as I work from bright to dark. You can best see this working process on the face: I give it more definition at this stage, using a hard-edged airbrush to make the nose, eyes and lips more obvious with regards to their shape and position.

3 Define the structure

I define the structure of the shoulder with a large, soft-edged airbrush at around 30 per cent opacity. I outline the mouth, eyes and nose much more now, using a small airbrush at around 80 per cent opacity. Then I make a rough sketch of the ear to see if I like its shape and position. At this stage, it doesn't matter that the only brush being used is the soft airbrush.

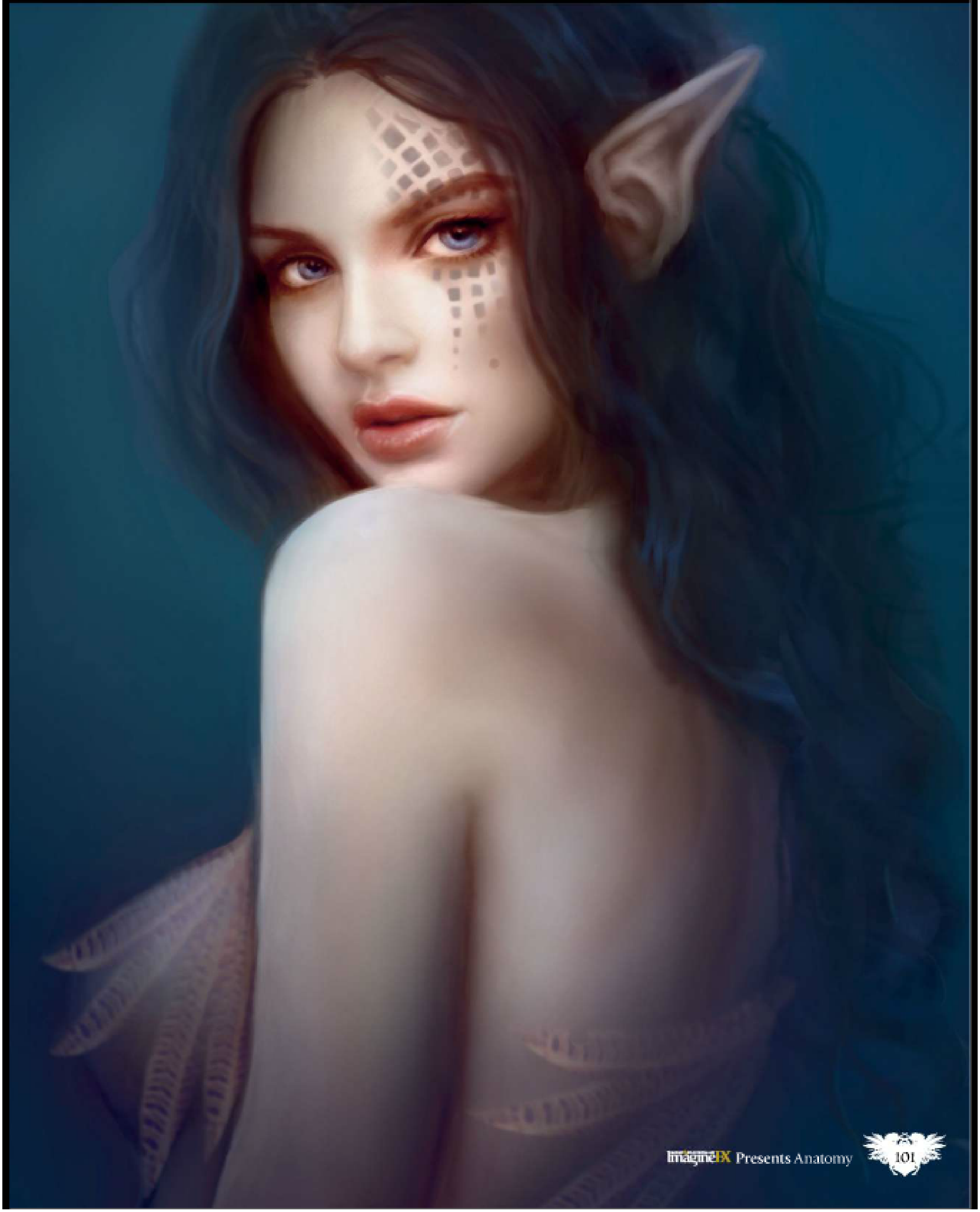
WATCH THIS!
www.bit.ly/ifz-skinvid

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

STANDARD BRUSH: HARD-EDGED AIRBRUSH

This brush is ideal for sketching and working on harder objects. When working on soft subjects it comes in handy when adding highlights that pop naturally, such as on lips and eyes.



Shortcuts
Levels
Ctrl+L (PC)
Cmd+L (Mac)
Use Photoshop's Levels tool to adjust your painting's brightness and contrast.

4 Adjusting the pose

I make the first adjustments to my character's pose by bending her back more. I also become a little clearer about her hair, but don't commit to its length because I'm not sure at this point how much of her bare back should be on display. I also start to correct her face here and there by making the nose smaller and adjusting the position of the eyes.

5 Correcting the arm

I now focus on making one more correction to her body. I fix her arm and add more contrast by painting in some dark grey. I usually never work with pure white or pure black, because I think that it makes any painting look too artificial. I then go back to her head and define the shape of her ear. I also make her lips and nose much softer looking by adding some dark grey to them with the soft airbrush.

6 Make allowances for the light

The light is coming in from the right and so her back needs to be much darker, especially around the shoulder blades. I achieve this using a dark grey with a big soft brush, again set to around 30 per cent opacity. Using the same airbrush I define her breast a little more. I then paint in the ear and frame her face better by defining the hair around it a little more.

PRO SECRETS

Draw from life

It's not really a secret, but many people seem to forget it: practise by drawing from life models. Whether you're a professional artist or a beginner, studying a real human being rather than a photo will make a world of difference. You will notice so many more things about the body when the model is sitting in front of you.

7 What to wear

I'm still unsure how to dress her, so I sketch rough clothing on a new layer and leave it for now. I draw some strands of hair on my dark base; I usually put hair on a new layer so I can push back parts with the Eraser. I continue to define her eyes. I make some minor changes to the face that add a lot to the shape. The lips and nose are softened, the eyebrows are darkened and the skin around her cheekbones is much clearer now. It's brighter around her mouth and on top of the cheek, and darker at its lower end. The face appears to be much rounder this way.

8 A cold colour palette…

This is where it becomes interesting. I'm going to experiment with colours, so I make a new layer and set it to Color. I start with a blue background around the figure; because the background light usually influences the figure, I let some of the blue cover her body, too. Her skin seems to be very cold and almost undead now.

9 …and a warm colour palette

In contrast to the cold colour approach is this warm colour test, which could be used as part of a conventional faerie theme set in a forest, for example. The green of the background and the soft red of her body are significantly enriched with yellow, which makes the whole theme very warm. Her skin also looks much more appealing now – I've given that cold, zombie look the heave-ho!

10 Mixing colours

To create an interesting colour palette I decide to mix the two. This isn't much of a problem because each palette is on its own layer. I erase parts of the background and her lower body from the warm colour palette, then I set the Eraser to a soft airbrush and use it at an Opacity of 40 per cent.

11 Refining the colours

For this step I have to merge the figure that I've already painted on one layer with the background layer, and then save the different versions of the painting as PSDs. The adjustments I make here are done on a duplicate of my merged layer, using the Color Balance and Levels functions. From step 10, the figure still has a lot more of the warm (yellow and red) tones in her face, which I keep to create a definite focal point. The overall image now contains more magenta and stronger contrasts.

12 The hair

It's time to find a solution for her hair. I make a new layer and roughly paint in a floating structure with a big, soft, airbrush, using dark blue. I want the hair to look almost weightless because the dark background could also suggest an underwater scene: a water faerie is something we don't see often. You can download or create a spackled brush to achieve a handpainted look on your skin. (It's highlighted in white in the picture above.) This brush comes from Linda Bergkvist's brush pack, and is ideal for giving the painting a less clean, traditional look after you've finished airbrushing. You can apply it loosely all over your figure, and it's excellent for painting hair.

13 Flip the image

Flipping your work – about once every hour, say – lets you see your art in a new light, as well as highlighting errors. In this instance it becomes clearer where the final figure should go. A good trick to neatly merge a figure into the background is to apply colour on top on a new layer, using a large, soft airbrush with around 30 per cent opacity. Painting with low opacity enables you to mix colour directly on your canvas. I also adjust her lips so they're as red as her eye makeup, again to catch the viewer's eye. To use the Noise filter to create some soft skin texture, I make a selection of the skin and copy it onto a new layer. I access the Noise filter and choose how intense I want it to be. The filter might darken the painting a little, but you can readjust the skin with Levels and erase parts you don't like.

Shortcuts

Color balance

Ctrl+B (PC)

Cmd+B (Mac)

Comes in handy when experimenting with colour schemes while working.

PRO SECRETS

Use a mood board

We often use a mood board for television and advertising projects. It's a collection of images that show the customer what colour schemes and styles we're planning to use. The mood board is a timesaver, especially for beginners because it ensures that you don't slavishly follow a reference image (in case you're working with any). More importantly, it helps you realise if the idea you've already had will work out that way.

14 Add some interest

I now try to brainstorm on what could look interesting for her skin. A tattoo or interesting makeup would be suitable, so I paint some random shapes over her face using a new layer, and push parts back with the Eraser to ensure the pattern matches the shape of her head. The Eraser can be a big help when painting elements onto a figure, like hair and things that are supposed to rest on the skin's surface. The Eraser method works well as long as all parts of the tattoo that cover darker areas, like the side of the cheek, are pushed back. The areas that cover brighter areas like the top of the cheek are only slightly adjusted. This creates the illusion of the tattoo forming itself along the skin.

15 Add some final cover-ups

I cover her body with some sort of underwater fantasy leaves and create another layer on the very top of the figure, to which I only add dark violet to fit the leaves better onto her body. This way of painting is a big timesaver and certainly helps to add a soft, tender feeling to the overall figure.

Artist Q&A

Our panel of experts shows ways to paint parts of the human body with realism, dynamism and atmosphere

The Fantasy & Sci-Fi Digital Art ImagineFX panel

Lauren K Cannon

Lauren is a freelance fantasy artist who specialises in the surreal. She lives in a small woodland village in New Jersey, US.

www.navate.com

Joel Carlo

Joel is a multimedia developer by day and a prolific digital artist by night. You may know him from the forums by his alter ego MechaHateChimp.

www.joelcarlo.net

Marta Dahlig

Polish artist Marta has been working with Photoshop and Painter for several years and has become an *ImagineFX* regular.

www.marta-dahlig.com

Cynthia Sheppard

Cynthia is a freelance digital artist. With a trad background, she brings classical techniques to her digital canvas.

www.sheppard-arts.com

Mélanie Delon

Mélanie is a freelance fantasy illustrator. She works as a cover artist for several publishers, and on her personal artbook series.

www.melaniedelon.com

Jeremy Enecio

Jeremy is an award-winning, New York-based illustrator. His many clients include Tor Books, Playboy and Wizards of the Coast.

www.jenecio.com

Question

I understand how to paint light skin but struggle with darker complexions. What are the keys to understanding dark skin tones?

Answer

Lauren replies

Dark complexions can be challenging to paint because they don't follow the same rules as lighter skin tones.

The basic colour components that give life to skin are the same – shadow tones, mid-tones, highlights and warm tones – but the way they behave are very different.

When painting light skin, the mid-tones have usually desaturated and the highlights are gentle and not much brighter. All of the contrast occurs between the shadows and mid-tone colours. With dark skin we have the opposite situation. It's much more reflective than light skin, so the highlights are much bolder. Therefore, the greatest contrast occurs between the mid-tones and highlights. The mid-tones also are different from lighter skin tones because they tend to be the most saturated colours, rather than the least saturated.

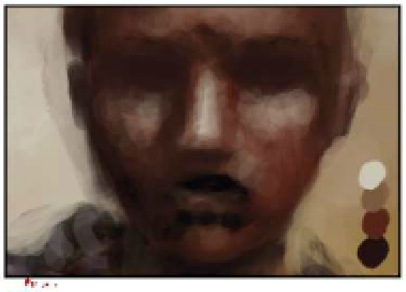
In workshops for light skin, you may have noticed bizarre colours are often used – blues, greens, and purples. This goes for darker complexions too – dark skin is very rich in colour, so don't get stuck using only browns!

Also try to always remember that the key to making a deep skin tone look believable is heavily dependant on the treatment of the highlights, and the amount of contrast between the mid-tones and highlights.

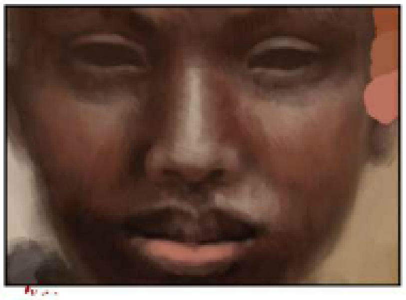
A successfully rendered dark complexion relies on rich colours and bold highlights that are not seen in paler skin tones.

By studying dark and light skin in greyscale, we can see how differently the shadows, mid-tones, and highlights compare in both complexions.

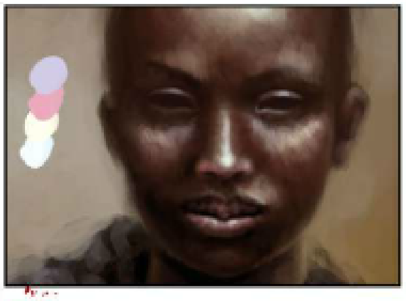
Step-by-step: Painting darker complexions



1 Choose your palette and block in the basic shapes. Remember that the colours you use will be dependant on the background – here, I'm using the green and pale grey of the background as a base for my highlights. The mid-tones I choose are a rich reddish-brown, which complement the green very well.

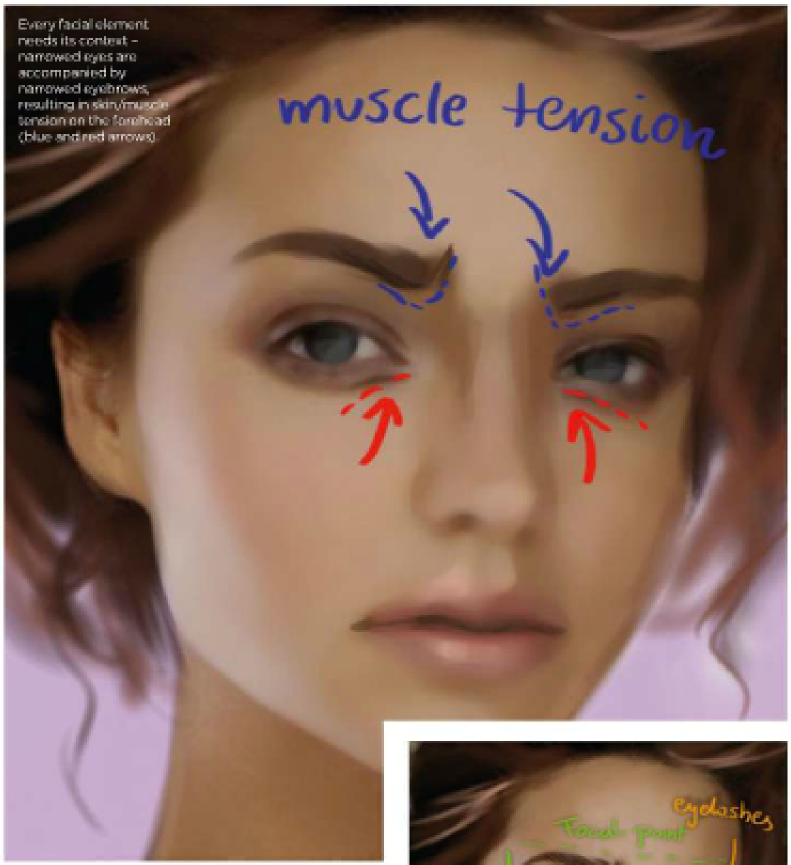


2 Refine your forms before you start adding any strong highlights, and remember that some parts of the body will have different pigments. The most obvious discrepancies are the palms, soles of feet and the insides of the lips, which will all be lighter and pinker than the rest of the skin. Use warm tones to bring out these areas.



3 Now it's time to add the bold highlights. They don't fall any differently on darker complexions, but they're much brighter than the rest of the skin. Bear in mind that different parts of the face will have different tones, so you need to think about using a variety of light colours to create a realistic look.

Question
My character portraits always look very dull and artificial, just like dolls. How can I make them livelier?



Every facial element needs its context – narrowed eyes are accompanied by narrowed eyebrows, resulting in skin/muscle tension on the forehead (blue and red arrows).

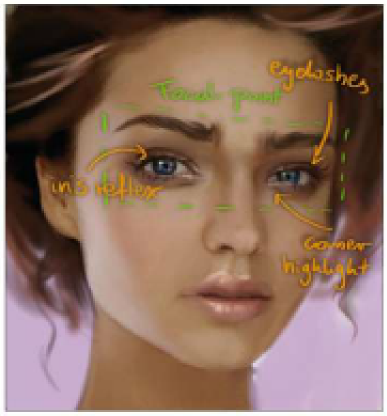
Answer
Marta replies

The easiest way to add a spark to any character, whether you're painting a bust portrait or a full body piece, is the correct definition of the face. That's done on two levels – theoretical and technical, of which theory is the most important.

Firstly, you have to decide on your character's facial expression. It doesn't matter whether it's an extreme emotion like anger, sadness or happiness, or something more calm such as regret or apathy – you should always define every face with three elements: eyes with eyebrows, and the interaction of the mouth (not only the lips, but the whole jaw) with the face muscles – for example, gritting the teeth will strengthen the jaw line, opening the mouth will cause the cheeks to change their convexity, and so on.

As far as technical pointers go, there are a few tricks that can really help to bring out that spark in your characters. Firstly, if you're going for a realistic effect, concentrate your efforts on the focal point area (which is usually the eyes). You can do this by adding an eye-catching element (such as vivid make-up), or perhaps by some thorough detailing.

In any case, always use the following tip: when defining the iris, remember to add some colour spots on top of it to break the mid-tone colour. But most importantly, paint in a small light reflex with the Airbrush tool. This is an incredibly easy task, but can result in amazing effects – be sure to compare the difference.



Detailing previously defined eyes automatically creates a wonderful focal point and lots of emotion (green and orange arrows).

Creating a natural freckled look is best achieved by using a custom brush and hand painting them.

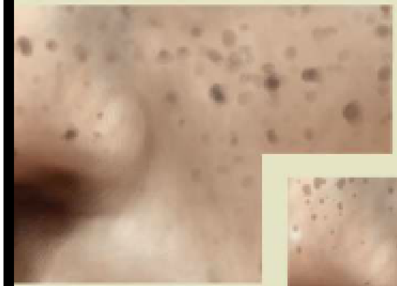
Question
I want to give my character freckles but don't know how. Any tips?

Answer
Lauren replies

Freckles and other marks on the skin help bring a new level of realism to an image regardless of the style. Remembering to add these marks – whether just a few 'beauty marks' or a whole face full of freckles – is a simple detail that will add texture to your image and more personality to your character.

Some people have tons of very light freckles; others only have one or two dark freckles. And of course, freckles can appear anywhere, not just the face.

When painting freckles, you can use a combination of hand painting and custom brushes to get any look you need. Hand painting is ideal when you only want a few freckles: just take a small round brush, darken the skin colour slightly and use low Opacity. But if you want lots of freckles, this method rapidly becomes tedious. A quick solution is to use a custom Photoshop brush made up of several dots and set it to Scatter. This will instantly give the illusion of many freckles randomly splashed across the skin. However, it may not look convincing up close because the dots will look pasted on to the skin and lack variety. To fix this, go back with your normal Round brush and paint in some variety of your own.



Painting freckles by hand (top) can be tedious but results are more varied.

Use a custom brush for lots of freckles.

Question
Is there a good way to emphasise movement and speed in my characters?

This image clearly conveys a sense of movement. The lines drawn along the contours of the subject's musculature provide a better feel of the rhythm of the character's anatomy in motion.

Comic books and manga artwork use action lines not only to emphasise focal points, but also to evoke a sense of speed and movement.

Answer
Joel replies

There are several ways you can convey a character's speed and movement in an illustration. The most common example is gesture – there are specific movements and positions within the subject's musculature and anatomy that leave a viewer with an impression of just how fast or slow that person is moving. A sense of rhythm is also created along the contours of a character's musculature, and being able to exaggerate this rhythm can help emphasise the feel of movement in an image.

Motion blur is another tool you can use to convey speed and movement. It occurs when a camera captures a single image of a moving object over a period of time. The best examples of motion blur can be seen in images when a camera is used with a slow shutter speed and long exposure, which creates a recognisable streaking effect on moving objects.

Action lines are also an effective way of creating a sense of movement, as they tend to draw the viewer's focal point from one area of an image to another. Comic book and manga artists frequently use action lines as a way of exaggerating a sense of speed and movement.

Question
Can you give me the lowdown on foreshortening please?

Answer
Cynthia replies

Foreshortening is a technique that uses perspective to create the illusion of three-dimensional depth in a two-dimensional space. The rules of perspective tell us that objects appear smaller as they recede into space; likewise, long objects start to appear shorter as they're tilted towards or away from the viewer.

You'll notice the effect used a lot in comics when, say, a hero has his fist punching towards the reader and the fist is drawn three times the size of his head. That's because his head is receding in space in relation to the fist, and his arm is now taking up much less space on the page because we're viewing much less of its surface area and mass. But how does our hero arrive at such unseemly proportions?

Many student artists (and not just those interested in fantasy and science fiction!) struggle putting the theory of foreshortening into practice. I've found that the best way to learn how it works is through observation and tons of practice with life drawing, but there are a few quick methods that can help us figure out the distortion using lines…

Question

I know that when painting skin tone highlights it's wise to use a turquoise shade. However, my results look awfully unnatural. What am I doing wrong?

Applying subtle highlights (2) on top of a blueish basis (1) results in a very natural, fresh effect.

Answer

Marta replies

A common mistake is that the turquoise highlights are too dark or applied with no prepared skintone basis.

Make your highlight shade lighter and more (blueishly) saturated than your mid-tone. Do not pick anything too dark, or it will create a blue light source effect instead of a fresh skin highlight. When you blur highlights and mid-tones together, you'll get a slightly bluer version of your initial skin tone. Apply it on a very low opacity around the areas that you intend to highlight. Only when the basis is ready should you apply the highlight on the most convex areas, starting with lowest transparency and gradually making the brush more opaque as you move on.

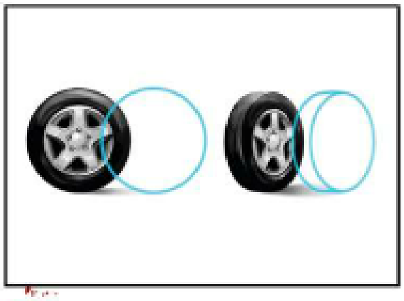
Preparing the skin tone basis means mixing your mid-tone with the highlight on different brush modes.

Artist's secret

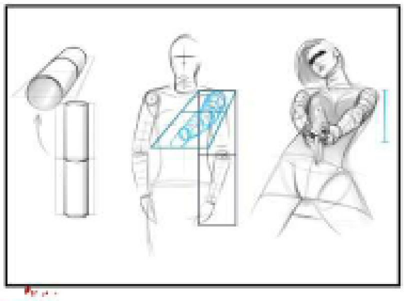
MEDIAN FILTER FOR SKETCHES

If your sketches are too rough, blur them with the Median tool in Photoshop. Vary the strength of the filter for different parts of the image – lower for eyes, and lips, stronger for cheeks and skin.

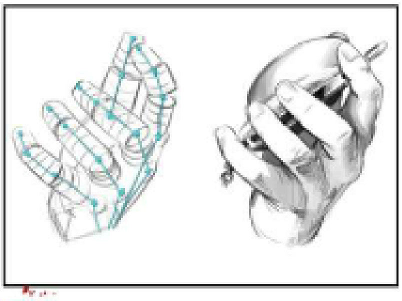
Step-by-step: Three ways to figure out foreshortening



1 The easiest way to demonstrate how the illusion works is with basic geometric shapes. One of my favourite old examples is what happens when you look at a wheel from the side. In a flat view, the wheel is a perfect circle. But when you walk around it, the shape becomes an oval that becomes slimmer as you keep moving.



2 So, how much of that arm should we see in the image? Another method uses a plane with a central line drawn through the elbow. When we tilt the plane using the Transform>Perspective tool, this central line recedes and indicates where the elbow joint should be when the arm is foreshortened.



3 There's also a benefit to seeing the effect in reverse. Draw your hand from life. Make a mark at each of the knuckle joints and draw a line between each joint. You should see a vast difference in line lengths – shorter when the finger segment is positioned toward you, and longer when it's parallel to your plane of view.

Question
What advice can you give me for painting my character's hair?

The extra details will give the hair a realistic look. I play with the Transfer brush settings to increase the colour variations and level of detail.

Answer
Mélanie replies

The most important thing to do is to think about the general appearance of the hair, which should suit the character's face. I always sketch different haircuts before settling on the right one. You must also consider the nature of the hair: is it curly or straight, thin or heavy?

Once you've decided on the hair type you can establish the colour scheme. I always start with a mid-tone; it's easier to add light and shadows onto one. Don't forget that hair is reflective – it's affected by the environment's light and colours, so don't hesitate to add, say, some touches of blue if the character is outside.

Regarding the details and the texture, I always paint the base with a basic Hard Round Edge set to a large diameter. This helps to achieve the general shape of the hair. Then I switch to a custom Spackled brush to work the strands and primary details. Once I'm happy with it, I focus on specific areas and add details where appropriate. I never overwork and texture the entire head of hair.

Artist's secret

TEXTURED HAIR BRUSH

This is the type of brush I use for introducing extra texture to hair. I usually pick a slightly lighter tone than that of the hair and paint wild strands over the hair base. I blur the result and repeat until I achieve the right effect.

Step-by-step: Creating a unique hairstyle

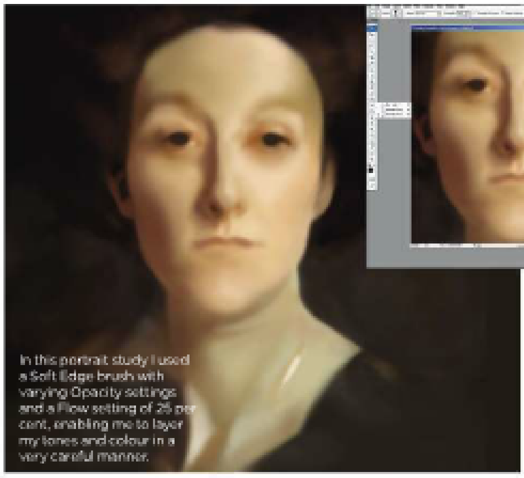
1 I start the painting process by choosing the shape and basic colour of the character's hair. You can see the main strands that will inject a natural and realistic look to the haircut. I use a very large brush; I don't want to lose myself in the details at this stage, so I keep everything very simple for the moment.

2 I'm now refining the strands, giving them an appealing look and shape. The hair of this character is wavy and so the curves need to be soft and light. The main light will come from above the top of her head, which means I must increase the lighting on this specific area and add more shadows on the bottom.

3 It's time to work in the details and the texture of the hair. For this stage I use a Spackled brush and a basic round edge set to Dynamic Shape for the tiny details. I select a strand (ideally one that's near the focal point of the piece, where I want to attract the eye) and carefully paint a few lengths of hair.

4 I repeat the techniques from previous step in areas of the character's hair where I want details to be visible, and then add dots of light on those particular strands, to make them stand out that much more. I also apply soft brush strokes with the Spackled brush to add more refinement to the hair.

Question
What exactly is 'sfumato', and can you explain how to create it digitally?



In this portrait study I used a Soft Edge brush with varying Opacity settings and a Flow setting of 25 per cent, enabling me to layer my tones and colour in a very careful manner.

You can also use the Smudge tool (R on your keyboard) with a strength setting of one per cent to help you achieve the subtle transitions more easily.

Answer
Joel replies

Sfumato – meaning 'faded away' in Italian – is a technique that involves layering thin translucent layers of paint in order to create very subtle transitions in tone and colour. These transitions are so slight that they create a soft, smokey-edged effect along the contours of a subject.

Sfumato has been practised extensively throughout art history and some of the world's best-known paintings, such as Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa, were created using this technique.

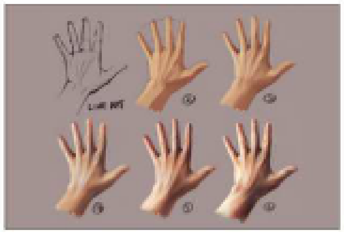
In order to create the sfumato technique digitally, pay close attention to how you lay down your colours and tones. Since the key to sfumato is creating a very subtle soft edge along the contours of your subject, you should look to tools like the Soft Edge brush tool in Photoshop to help you achieve this effect.

Also, varying the Opacity of your Soft Edge brush, along with the brush's Flow settings, can help you keep control of the amount of paint flow and also assist you in layering your colours in both a careful and subtle manner.

Question
Can you help me make my colour shading varied, so it looks realistic?

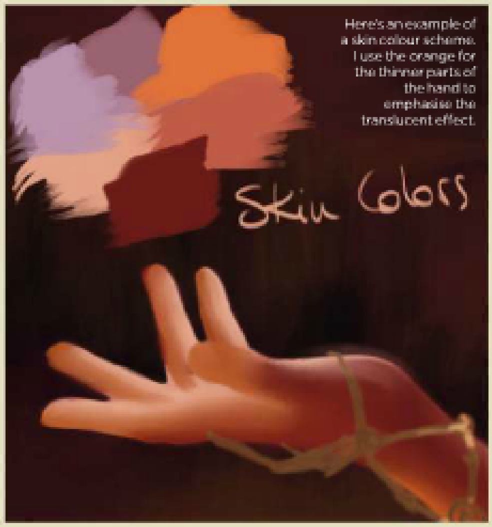
Answer
Cynthia replies

Whether you begin with a line sketch or value drawing, the key to realistic colour shading on any surface is consistent blending. In Photoshop, start with a single colour somewhere in the middle value range of the object. On top of that initial colour, add a highlight and shadow colour, keeping the direction of your light source in mind. To blend between the three shades, toggle your Eyedropper tool (Alt on PC, Option on Mac, while the Brush tool is engaged), and sample from within the area. Using a low flow or opacity, brush over the hard edges of each shade. Once you have the basic three colours blended, add stronger colours and details with finer brushes where necessary. To add extra life to a fabric, for instance, you might use a cross-hatch pattern to suggest a weave, or paint over areas with background colours to suggest sheerness.



Using the back of my hand, I've created a step-by-step skin-blending demo.

Question
How should I paint skin that looks light and translucent?



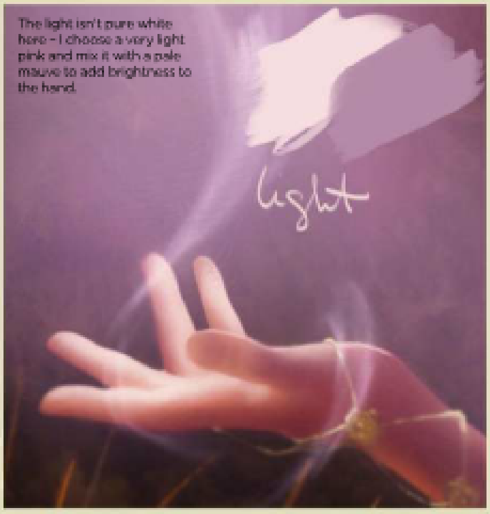
Here's an example of a skin colour scheme. I use the orange for the thinner parts of the hand to emphasise the translucent effect.

Answer
Mélanie replies

The secret here lies in the colour scheme. Skin is never only pink or beige, light is never pure white and shadows are never black. To achieve the effect that a bright colour has on skin, you have to mix different colours.

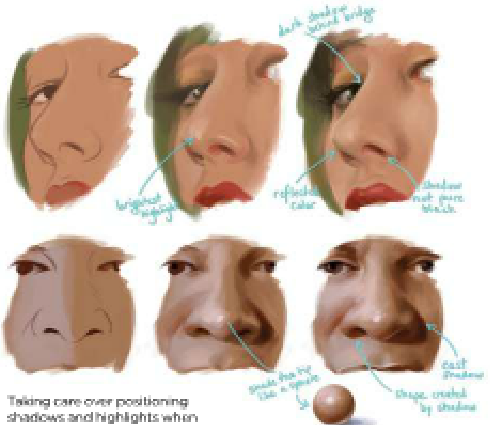
The best way to understand this is to study it from real life: you'll notice that skin is composed of myriad colours, such as green, yellow and even blue for the lights, while violet, gold, brown or red make up the shadows. The hardest part of the solution is finding the balance between those colours.

Translucent skin is exactly the same: you need to play with saturated colours such as orange, red or yellow to simulate the thinness of the skin, to achieve the right effect. So don't be afraid to use those tones – just add them on a separate layer to see if they work or not.



The light isn't pure white here – I choose a very light pink and mix it with a pale mauve to add brightness to the hand.

Question
How do I paint noses with different angles and shapes?



Taking care over positioning shadows and highlights when shading a nose will help you to achieve a higher degree of realism.

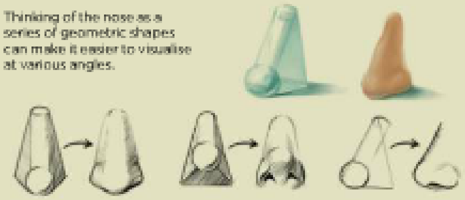
Answer
Cynthia replies

Start by visualising the nose as a 3D object that casts shadows. As well as its anatomy, many of the shapes we think of when we imagine a nose are created by shadows that give form to the nose itself.

In its simplest form, the nose is a triangular block that's wide in the back and tapers towards the front. You can use a visual model to determine where the major cast shadows will fall, and see how its bridge would change shape from straight to angled as the head turns. Of course, noses don't have sharp angles, so we have to imagine the tip of the nose as being more like a sphere and the bridge like a cylinder when shading.

When painting the nose, keep these things in mind. Start with a line drawing on a flat skin tone. Bearing in mind the geometric shapes we've already discussed, apply your brushstrokes following the contours. Some noses are shiny and so they often pick up colour from the surrounding environment. Reserve the lightest colour on the skin of the face for the highlight on the nose.

Thinking of the nose as a series of geometric shapes can make it easier to visualise at various angles.



Artist's secret
A NOSE FOR SHADING

Avoid pure black when painting nostrils. The nostril itself is an empty space with very little discernible shape of its own, so what's actually painted is the shadow cast by the surrounding nose. Instead of black, choose a dark colour that resembles the other shadows in your painting.

Question
Can you clarify what 'chiaroscuro' means?

Answer
Joel replies

Certainly! Chiaroscuro is an Italian term meaning 'light' (chiaro) and 'dark' (scuro). The technique of chiaroscuro is used as a way to create bold contrast between the lightest and darkest values of an image, and concentrates on the control and rendering of tone.

Leonardo da Vinci has been credited as the first to develop and refine the technique. He understood that in order to recreate the likeness of a subject, it was necessary to duplicate the exact shape of both the light and shadow masses as they appeared on the subject's form.

To do this, he identified two specific types of shadows that are created as light falls across the surface of an object: form shadows (A) and cast shadows (B). To explain further, a form shadow is the shadow mass that you see on the side of a subject that is turned directly away from its light source. A cast shadow, meanwhile, is the shadow mass that occurs when part of a form blocks a light source, resulting in a shadow that is cast on an adjacent surface.

If you'd like to learn about chiaroscuro, visit your local museum. You'll be surprised at how much this technique has been used – including in my image here!

Question
What are the best brushes to doodle with digitally?

Answer
Jeremy replies

Just like sketching with pencil, charcoal or pen and ink, keeping the materials simple is the key. Most of the time I use just a Hard Round brush with Pressure Sensitivity enabled for Size and Opacity. Lately, however, I've added a bit of texture to the brush too: in the Brush Preset manager, turn on the Dual Brush option. This keeps the shape of the brush the same, but adds a secondary texture as you put less pressure on the stylus. This gives the otherwise smooth digital surface a bit of graininess, which is good if you enjoy sketching with charcoal. If you're a pen-and-ink type, try the Hard Round brush, but uncheck Other Dynamics in the Brush Preset manager. However you work, experiment with the brush options until you get a natural feel.

An example of a Photoshop sketch. The texture is subtle, but that's just my aesthetic.

Question
How can I recreate a realistic watercolour effect or style in Photoshop?

Answer
Joel replies

Creating a traditional watercolour in Photoshop is fairly simple. The first thing to consider is the kind of watercolour effect you want to achieve. Water media such as watercolours and gouache can be applied in a very diluted manner or as a dry technique, similar to how you would work with acrylics. It should be noted that there is really no right or wrong way of doing so, as each technique will give a different look and feel to an image. It's simply a matter of preference, but knowing the effect you want to achieve will make things a lot easier.

If I'm using a wet medium in a traditional fashion, I generally like to keep my paints very diluted because of the translucent effect that occurs as the medium dries. Once it's dry, I sometimes opt to work over the image using a dry technique for things like highlights. The key to achieving this effect in Photoshop is to adjust your brush opacity. A lower opacity enables you to lay your colour over your image while retaining translucency and nuances of previous brush strokes. A higher opacity lets you work in colour in a more opaque manner, which is great for fixing errors or adding highlights.

In this example, I choose to paint in some of the highlights in an opaque fashion similar to a traditional dry brush technique, enabling me to separate the figure from the background better.

Highlights don't always have to be painted in. Here I create them by erasing the mid-tones in areas where the highlights need to be seen.

Step-by-step: Getting that watercolour feel

1 I begin by scanning in a torso study created using coloured pencil on white paper. I set the blend mode of the sketch layer to Multiply and create a background layer underneath the sketch layer. Here I fill in the background layer with a light beige tone to give the overall image a lovely soft tint.

2 Next, I create a new layer just below the sketch layer and begin to lay in some colour in a quick and loose fashion, using a Round Hard-Edged brush. Here it's important to keep the Opacity of your brush at a low setting, anywhere between 30 per cent and 50 per cent. Any higher than this will obscure your lines.

3 Finally, I drop in some watercolour textures using a set of custom brushes. The trick here is not to overdo this effect, as it can tend to make your image look convoluted and overworked. Remember to keep your brushwork light and simple and you should attain the desired effect of a digital watercolour.

Question
How can I paint and convey emotion in eyes? Mine always look dead and flat.

Answer
Cynthia replies

Defining the shape of the eye is the first step in creating emotion. Just by manipulating the way the lids curve and how much of the iris and pupil is showing, you can portray a near-infinite range of expressions. I recommend creating sketches of your own eyes in a mirror, or using friends as live references to really learn how the muscles in the face affect the eyes.

To give several examples of how different emotions in eyes might look in sketch form, I'll start with a neutral relaxed shape.

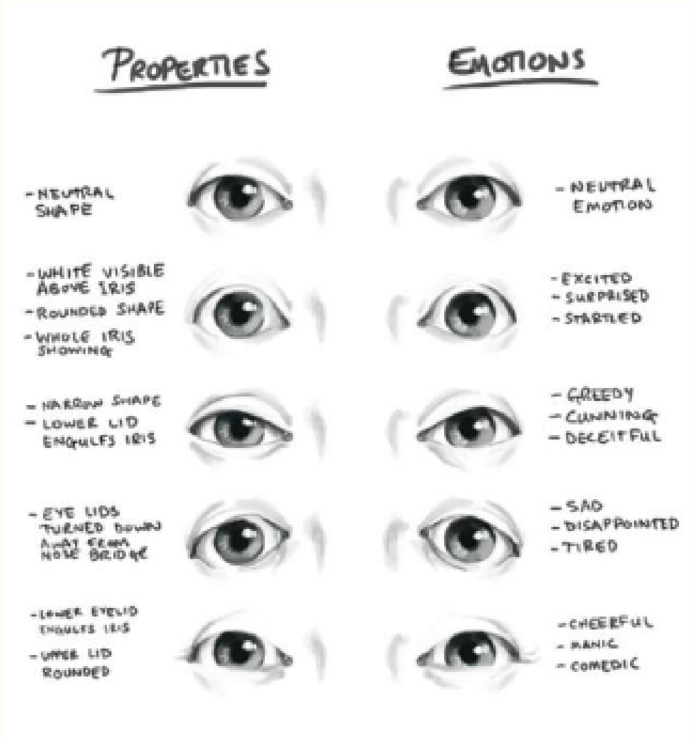
For an excited, surprised or startled expression, curve the upper lids into almost a perfect semi-circle, leaving some of the white of the eye between the iris and the upper lid. As a general rule, the more white that shows above the iris area, the more wildly intense the look will be.

For a cunning or deceitful glare, bring the upper lid down to around the top of the pupil, and bring the lower lid up to cover part of the iris. This narrow almond shape suggests the eye muscles are being tightened, which could be representative of heavy thought or strain.

For a tired, disappointed or sad expression, turn both eyes down towards the outside of the face. The downward angle suggests the tightening of the muscles between the eyebrows, which is characteristic of worry and woe.

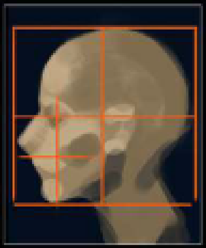
Then there's the cheerful smile, in which the cheek muscles force the eye's lower lid upward to engulf the lower part of the iris. For a more excited smile, curve the upper lid more dramatically.

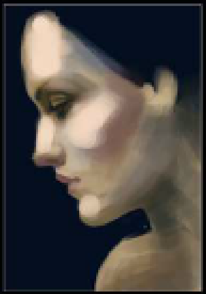
Beyond shape, there are a couple of tricks to making eyes capture your viewer's attention. Most people are subconsciously lured in by larger eyes, so one way to grab attention is to enlarge them slightly. Most people don't notice when they're only a tiny bit bigger. In sorrowful scenes you might add some tears pooling up, or some redness in the whites of the eyeball. For intensity, keep the colour in the iris very light opposite the highlight, as this can work to add boldness to even very dark eyes.



Choosing the shape of the eyes is the first step to determining perceived emotion.

Question
How do I draw face proportions in profile?





In a profile portrait there's almost no possibility of eye contact, so you must play with the light and details to catch the viewer's attention.

Answer
Mélanie replies

Drawing a face in profile isn't that complicated, but it's quite different than painting a portrait face-on. The proportions are the same, it's just the placement of the features that you must consider.

The first thing to do is to quickly sketch the base of the face. Imagine it as a square: the nose and the back of the head are the left/right extremities and the chin and top of the head are the top/bottom extremities.

Once this is looking okay, almost half the job is done – all you have to do next is place the eye and the mouth. The eye should be on the middle horizontal line, and the mouth placed on the upper part of the bottom square. It might help to draw those lines over your sketch, but don't stick too much to them: they're only meant to be a guide.

The other important factor is the volume. If the light and shadows aren't correctly placed then the character will look weird, so after thinking about lines consider the shapes. Here in my sketch the light comes from the top, so I add light on four main areas: the forehead, nose, cheek and chin, which are the parts of the face that contain the most edges and angles.

Artist's secret

REFRESH YOUR EYES

Here is a very simple tip that I always follow: I flip my image horizontally and work the illustration in this new position. This way I instantly see the mistakes, especially anatomical ones that you might not notice after working for hours on the same painting.

Question
How can I introduce a textured, atmospheric effect into my digital art?

Through the use of naturally sourced textures and overlaid brush strokes, I'm able to tone down any overly digital areas of my art.

Answer
Jeremy replies

There are several ways to add natural-looking textures into your digital work. I approach my textures in two ways: using a range of brushstroke techniques and overlaying scanned textures.

Most of the time, I use a Hard Round brush, with Shape and Opacity dynamics set to Pressure Sensitivity and a little Dual Brush action. I never use blurry brushes to render forms because they always just look too 'digital' for me. I layer brush strokes over the top of each other and colour pick the overlapped colours as I go using the Eye Dropper tool. This produces a nice gradient while still allowing the brushstrokes to show through.

When it comes to scanned-in textures, you can literally use whatever you want, as long as it fits on your scanner. Mostly I stick with traditional things such as old grainy papers, ink and watercolour splotches, charcoal rubs, messy acrylic brushstrokes, and so on. Once scanned in, you can go to town messing with layer modes and opacities. Even if you've done this a million times, this stage will always be experimental to some degree.

Sometimes, I like to invert the layer and set the layer mode to Screen for some lighter speckling and graininess. This can add a lot of atmosphere to a painting because you can develop pleasing effects that emulate smoke and dust.

Artist's secret
STAYING CONSCIOUS OF YOUR EDGES

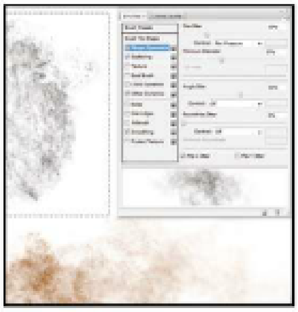
When working digitally, it's easy to have the edges of objects equally sharp throughout. Having softened (not necessarily blurred) and sharpened edges helps with focal points, unifies the image and produces a painterly look.

Step-by-step: Get more from your textures

1 When creating textures with natural media, ask yourself whether it's going to lay on top of the image as a faux surface texture, or will it be used as a special effect, like smoke? Play with wet and dry application of ink, use vine and compressed charcoal for different levels of intensity, and go wild with some acrylic paint. Organise them into a collection for use in future pieces.

2 Overlaying scanned textures is one of the last stages of a painting for me. Once you've placed the scan over your image, explore all the layer modes to see what looks good. Change the layer's Hue/Saturation so it won't just be black and white, and the layer Opacity to add believability to the texture. I end up with ten or so texture layers, but keep them fairly subtle.

3 If you want to produce an interesting effect in which the texture is lighter than your image, select the texture layer and click Image>Adjustments>Invert. This will turn your scan into a negative. Change the layer mode to Screen or Color/Linear Dodge. Adjust Levels and Opacity to your liking. This can give you an effect of smoke or dust, as well as enhance the faux surface texture.



4 You can make your own brushes out of textures. Select a square portion of a scan with the Marquee tool, making sure the texture doesn't touch the edges of the selection box. Go to Edit>Define Brush Preset. This will add your selection to your brush palette. Select the brush and open your Brush Presets to adjust Shape Dynamics, Scattering and so on.

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To celebrate Magic: The Gathering's 20th birthday, we talk to some amazing card artists, such as Jason Chan, Scott M Fisher and John Stanko, while workshop artists include Aleksi Briclot and Volkan Baga. Elsewhere, Sparth 'sculpts' a sci-fi vista and Dave Rapoza paints a dark, brooding scene.

Issue 100 October 2013

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Our bumper 100th anniversary issue looks back to our past, and casts an eye over the artists of the future. There's a countdown of your 100 greatest artists of all time, a review of your favourite covers, plus workshops from Jason Chan, Raymond Swanland and the mighty Genzoman!

Issue 101 November 2013

Let our sci-fi artists take you to strange, new worlds: John Berkey, Peter Elson and Chris Moore visit a galaxy called 'Inspirational'. Our workshop section includes art from Keith Thompson, Emma Vieceli and Thom Tenery, and we chat to the artists of imaginary Friends Studios.

Issue 102 December 2013

Traditional skills meet digital methods in Jean-Sébastien Rossbach's cover art, which also heralds a new section in the magazine that's devoted to bringing you the best in traditional fantasy art. We talk to Keith Thompson and Daren Bader, while Jim Pavlec brings an Eerie gothic creation to life.

Issue 103 Christmas 2013

Discover the skills you'll need to break into the video games industry, as we speak to the people behind The Witcher 3: Wild Hunt, Star Wars: The Force Unleashed, Remember Me and Mass Effect. Traditional fantasy artist Tom Kidd paints a book cover, and Dave Kendall puts Manga Studio 5 to the test.

Issue 104 January 2014

This month's artists will help you push your painting skills into previously untapped areas, with advice on developing your artistic voice, creating art from smoke brushes, and more. Simon Dominic breathes life into an old concept, and we reveal the winners of this year's Rising Stars contest.

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